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the EARTH

MARGARET WALKER

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YOURS IS THE EARTH

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Margaret Vail



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Under Government regulations for saving metal and paper during the war, the size and bulk of this book have been reduced below the customary peacetime standards. Only the format has been affected. The text is complete and unabridged.

This book is affectionately dedicated to

JOAN AND FRANK

*whose warm and generous hospitality
made the writing of it possible*

*"If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"*

.

Yours is the Earth, and everything that's in it"

—"If" BY RUDYARD KIPLING

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With a few obvious exceptions, all names of persons and places in this book have been changed.

PART ONE

International Marriage

I

ROSE-HÉLÈNE, our little daughter, was born on March 22, 1938, at the American Hospital in Neuilly, just outside Paris. Robert remarked proudly, when she was only a few hours old, that she looked so "finished," and she did, in spite of the fact that she weighed no more than five pounds. She wasn't an underdone color, but a lovely shell pink; her nose was just a smaller edition of what it adorably is today, a replica in miniature of her Papa's; she had lots of hair, reddish gold in color, and her eyes were blue, as with all new babies, but unusually large and set wide apart. As a tiny baby she was very good, and as she grew older, she was always happy and contented, smiling and laughing at the funny stories she seemed to be telling herself. In spite of her charm, however, and despite our adoration of her, I began at once to be severe with Rose-Hélène. I knew that this program would not meet with the approval of those of my American friends who had modern ideas of child training and education, but how thankful I have been on so many occasions during the past four years that I did embark upon an old-fashioned system of rigid discipline for her. From the very beginning, I demanded from our small daughter obedience, self-reliance and self-control. I often wonder what would have happened to us in the various situations in which we have found ourselves during the past stormy years, had I not been able to count upon Rose-Hélène's absolute cooperation, had she herself not been confident that what Mama was demanding of her was fair and just. How unpleasant it would have been for everyone if she had indulged in a display of temperament or exhibitionism in planes, in hotels, or on trains or boats, where we have spent most of the past three years. What would we have done if she had felt the urge, and deemed she had the right to express herself when, for instance, we were

up on a mountain peak in the Pyrenees? No, my great respect for progressive schools and modern ideas of child training notwithstanding, I do not regret the program I decided, back in 1938, to adopt for Rose-Hélène. It has proven to be the one which has made it possible for us both to live the kind of life we have had to live.

I had met Robert, my husband and Rose-Hélène's father, in Paris in August, 1935. A mutual friend invited us for an evening of bridge at her home on the Left Bank. I returned to New York six days later, but Robert and I saw each other every one of those six days. I told Robert about Derek, my first husband, and his tragic death, a topic so painful to me I had not before been able to discuss it with anyone. I had been, I told Robert, spending the summer alone in Paris trying to visualize a future without the man who had dominated my every thought and action since I had been eighteen years old. Derek had been twenty-seven years older than I and he had been, I said, everything to me. I was an only child, had been a lonely child; I had lost my father when I was four years old, had been sent away to school at the age of five, and saw very little of my mother during my most impressionable and formative years. Derek had given me the tender, protective and proud love of a parent, the happy comradeship of a brother. He had been a kind and trusted friend, kinder and more infinitely tender, more deeply trusted than any friend I had ever had or would have again, I was sure—Here my voice trailed brokenly off, but I suddenly felt vaguely that there was something missing; I felt for the first time that perhaps there had been something which Derek had not been for me.

Derek had been, however, the strongest and the best influence which had, until then, come into my life and it was he, more than any other person, who had moulded my character, influenced my opinions and my outlook upon life. So when he died, after a two-year illness, I felt bewildered, lost, completely adrift, and I wondered whether I could walk alone, what kind of pattern of existence I could work out for myself without the beloved and kind friend who had also been my husband.

Some of this I confided to Robert, much of it he divined during the long walks we took together through the Paris we both loved, and the hours we spent in restaurants and at sidewalk cafés. He, in turn, talked with me of his own perplexities. His home, he told me, was in a Department halfway down the Atlantic coast of France, where his parents had their estate, Les Chênes. They were French, his parents; there was not a drop of blood in the veins of either his father or his

mother, he said, that was not French—yet Robert himself did not seem to me to be what I had always thought of as “typically French.” He had grey eyes fringed with very thick, long lashes; brown hair which inclined to curl a little; a sensitive mouth which was perhaps just a shade too small; a fine Grecian nose. Robert was tall—tall, that is, for a Frenchman, being just under six feet in height; his shoulders were broad and he had a splendid physique. He seemed to me, as I leaned, elbow on the little marble-topped table, chin cupped in hand, watching him talk with his arms and hands and eyes as well as with his lips, he seemed to me to be the most exciting and interesting and attractive man I had ever met. It seemed strange, I mused, that Robert had never married; then he answered my unspoken question. “My parents have selected a French girl for me to marry,” he said, half shyly, “a girl of good family, who would bring me a comfortable dowry—which I shall not at all need. I am not in love with her, nor she with me, but it is tacitly understood by everyone, including the girl herself, that she is the one I shall eventually marry.” He had traveled enough in other countries to be able to see how the French *mariage de convenance* looked to the outsider. He had studied for the diplomatic service (which accounted for his excellent command of English) but had abandoned the idea of a diplomatic career. He obtained his parents’ permission to travel, and went to Spain and Italy, as well as to the Scandinavian countries, Finland and Russia and, in 1934, the year before we met, he had visited the United States. He loved America, was enchanted with Americans and found us and our country stimulating and exciting. He was not sure that he wanted to follow the path of least resistance and enter into that *mariage de convenance* and settle down to become one of the landed gentry of his part of France.

“There is a further complication,” Robert went on. “I have just inherited a large estate, L’Ormeau, from my uncle, a bachelor brother of my father’s. L’Ormeau belonged to my grandparents, and my father and uncle were born there. My mother inherited Les Chênes from a bachelor brother, so my father did not need another property and L’Ormeau, consequently, was left by my grandparents to my uncle, the younger brother. Now he has suddenly died and left the entire estate to me—his namesake. There is a chateau, with ten or twelve farms and an income apart from the rents of the farms. My uncle has stipulated in his will, however, that I am not to live in the chateau or receive the income until I am married—no one can occupy the chateau

until then except the old housekeeper, Véronique, who has been there for more than forty years, and my father is to receive the income until I marry. My uncle probably considered that there had already been too many bachelors in the family and wished to arrange matters so that I, at least, would marry."

"That is pretty hard on the girl you do marry," I observed, "for she will always wonder, I should think, whether you married her for your money—unless, of course, you marry the girl who had already been selected for you."

We laughed together over this, and Robert then told me a little about his "country" as he always called it, as though it were a foreign land—as indeed it is, I later discovered. Anyone who has not had the good fortune of being born in that Department of France is looked upon by the peasants and gentry of that region, as a foreigner, even though he may be French and from a district only two hundred miles away. The region was a charming one, but one of the most backward in all of France. Robert said that he enjoyed its outdoor, extrovert life for a month or two of the year, then would come the urge to exercise his brain as well as his body and he would leave Les Chênes for Paris, where he could find the books, the courses and lectures, the plays, which would nourish his hungry and enquiring mind. "If ever a book is found lying on our drawing room table at Les Chênes," he told me, half laughing, "it is remarked that Robert must be home—there is *A Book*." He was spoiled, of course, but his sense of humor saved him from being smug or arrogant. The kind of life to which he had been born was ever at war with his mental capacities and his liberal mind and spirit—in this, he was the exact opposite of his older brother, Michel, a bachelor who seemed to have no intention of marrying or of settling down. There was another brother, Didier, nine years younger than Robert, and one sister, Chantal, who was the oldest. Chantal was the only one of the four children who had done what was expected of her. She had married a moral, conscientious and upright man of wealth and property, of whom her parents thoroughly approved, and she had promptly had, in rapid succession, five children, four girls and a boy. Didier had startled everyone by announcing, when he was sixteen years old, that he was going to be a priest. This was a great blow to Robert's father, for no Vigny had ever been known to cast aside the delights and pleasures of life—in which was embodied the Hunt—for one of seclusion and deprivation.

Robert, therefore, was the son upon whom the hopes of the family were pinned. It was for him to make the brilliant marriage, to take his place at L'Ormeau, to have sons to carry on the name and the title.

By the time I sailed for America, on the seventh day after we had met, we were wondering, Robert and I, whether what we both believed to be impossible had happened to us. I had not supposed I could ever love any man again, after Derek. I still loved Derek in the same way I always had; what I felt now was a completely new emotion, and I was afraid it must be love. Afraid, for I was sure that nothing could ever come of it.

Robert, on his side of the Atlantic, however, was also trying to analyse a new emotion. He had always been interested in love, but never in terms of marriage, and when he had thought of marriage it had never been in terms of love. But, by the spring of 1936, after almost daily letters had shuttled back and forth across the ocean all winter, Robert had decided that he would like to marry; to marry me, to marry for love. This last was revolutionary, and he knew that we would have an unpleasant time trying to overcome his parents' opposition to such a marriage. I was aware of the fact that I was thoroughly undesirable as a daughter-in-law for a French Catholic family, and particularly for a Catholic family of Robert's country. I was five months older than he; an American; a widow; a Protestant. And, while Derek and I had had a large income, I had been left with very little money upon his death, so there would not be an important *dot*, and a *dot*, I knew, was a most important item in any French marriage.

I went to France early in the summer of 1936 to talk the question over seriously with Robert. He had not, as yet, said anything to his parents, for he did not want to brave their wrath until he was certain that I was willing to marry him. After we had had several long talks, and I understood more about Robert's background, I became convinced that a chasm yawned between us, too wide and too deep for even our love to span. There were too many barriers between us, too many prejudices to combat, too many obstacles to overcome, obstacles which I felt were insurmountable. I did not believe that we could overcome the objections of Robert's family to our marriage, but, even if we did, I did not feel that our marriage could be a success. Our traditions were so diametrically opposed. I found it difficult to adjust myself to many of Robert's points of view, and he could not understand many of mine. "You know, Robert," I told him one day, "it does not matter one bit to me *who* you are; what interests me is *what* you are. I know that you are a

Vigny, that you will inherit your uncle's fortune; I know, also, that, according to your traditions, it is enough for you to be a Vigny and to own a large estate and have a good income. But our standards are different. Even a Rockefeller works, in America. You would be ashamed to work; in my country, men are ashamed not to work. That is a serious difference in point of view. I would be bored with a man who had nothing to do; I would have no respect for him, and I could not live with a man I did not respect."

We both were miserably unhappy when I left for England to get away from Robert where I could think the whole thing out from a different perspective, and, when I sailed for America without seeing him again, Robert was suffering deeply—and for the first time in his life. I wrote him, from the depths of my own misery (a more familiar emotion for me than for him) that I was convinced that the idea of marriage between us was hopeless; I was resolved, I said, to try to forget him, and I advised him to forget me.

The winter of 1936 passed, and 1937 was upon us, I in America, trying to forget and not succeeding, Robert in France, not even trying to forget. He even became so desperate that he went to Les Chênes and broke the news to his family that he had fallen in love with an American widow and wanted to marry her. His father's roars, his mother's hysterical tears, his sister's scorn, and his brothers' disappointment, effectively silenced him and his courage fled. He fled too, back to Paris.

He wrote me, however—the first letter either of us had written the other for six months. He told me of his visit to Les Chênes, he said that he was discouraged but not defeated; he was more than ever certain that he would never marry anyone if he did not marry me; he knew he could not be happy without me and he was persuaded that we could be happy together. He proposed that I marry him secretly, in Switzerland; if I would be willing to do this, he would find a job of some kind in Paris, and we would live there until the storms which our marriage would precipitate had subsided, then we would go to L'Ormeau, if I wished.

"Oh, how I wish Derek were here to tell me what to do," I thought helplessly, then I realized that if he were here, this particular problem would not be presenting itself. After deep reflection, I did what seemed to me to be the most daring deed ever committed by girl or man—I sailed (in March, 1937) for France, met Robert, went with him to Switzerland where we were married without the knowledge or the consent

of any member of Robert's family. There was only my dear friend, Peggie R. who lived in Geneva, to witness our civil and secret marriage.

When we returned to Paris, Robert wrote his parents that he had married "la dame Americaine" of whom he had spoken the winter before. They refused to meet me, or to see Robert. His father, we were told, was in a towering rage, Robert's mother was prostrated—one had only to mention his name and she would take to her bed for several days; Chantal and her husband were breathing fire and fury, and the brothers thought Robert had been stupid and ought to be left alone, to repent at his leisure. It was a bitter blow and disappointment to them, this inexpedient marriage with an ineligible American. Didier came, eventually, over to our side in the family feud, and he was Robert's witness in a second marriage which was performed in France. (We had been advised that there might be some question concerning the validity, in France, of a marriage which had been performed in Switzerland according to Swiss, and not according to French, law.)

II

When our little Rose-Hélène was born, therefore, the following year, I still had not met Robert's family, except for Didier. The uncle's estate had not yet been turned over to Robert—my father-in-law was still receiving the income. We would have been glad to have it, for we had not much money without it, but we managed, for Robert had surprised everyone, including himself, by finding a job and, in the best American manner, making good at it. No member of the Vigny family had ever worked before, not in all the thousands of years the family had graced the *Almanac de Gotha*, the Social Register of France. This was put down, not to any inherent weakness or hereditary defect in Robert's character, but to my American influence over him, and was regarded as one more evidence of the gloomy fate which awaited him with me as his wife. Robert was as pleased and proud of his job as a child of its favorite toy, and he rose in a few months to a responsible place in the large firm with which he was affiliated. There had been conferences with the family lawyer and we had agreed not to go to L'Ormeau so long as relations between my family-in-law and us remained strained. It would have been awkward and embarrassing, I could understand that, for the family to have us living so near, for the two estates were

but twenty miles apart. We didn't really mind staying in Paris, for we had many friends there, and we had no particular desire to live in a big, isolated chateau. We had a nice little apartment overlooking the Etoile, we had our baby, Robert had his job, he and I had each other, and life was very sweet.

We felt, however, that, while all was so very well with our little lives, the world outside our own four walls could be improved upon a bit. The crisis of Munich had shaken us, and we feared, but hated to admit, that war had been only temporarily averted, that it had to come, sooner or later. All during the spring and summer of 1939, various friends of Robert's were mobilized. Didier had been called back from Rome to do his military service. Robert's military papers stated that he was to report at his mobilization centre, Saumur, the first day of General Mobilization. But—war just couldn't come, we told ourselves and each other. It would be too ridiculous, too cruel, for us to be separated so soon after our marriage, after all we had gone through to be together. The radio and the newspapers continued to paint frightening and menacing pictures of the situation in Europe, the atmosphere of Paris was tense and depressing, and, by the middle of August, everyone's nerves were strained almost to the breaking point. Robert was given fifteen days' vacation at that time, so we went to La Baule with Rose-Hélène. We took with us only our shorts and clothes suitable for the seaside—I grimly and defiantly relegating our gas masks to the darkest corner of a closet.

We did have a happy time at the seashore. We lay on the beach, in the sun; we laughed together at Rose-Hélène's astonished alarm when she first walked on sand and her feet slipped and slid, making it even more difficult for her to maintain her seventeen-months' balance. Robert took her into the deep water, on his shoulders, she paddled about fearlessly by herself in the shallow water, her golden hair curling, her cheeks flushed, her big eyes dancing with fun. What a pity it was for her paternal grandparents, we thought as we watched her with loving pride, that they had not yet seen their little granddaughter, the only grandchild to have the family name.

We tried, Robert and I, not to think, during our holiday at La Baule, of the dark cloud that was hanging so heavily over Europe, over us. We did not talk about it, or read the newspapers, or listen to the radio. We pretended not to be aware that our happiness was menaced, we

pretended not to be waiting for Robert's summons, but neither of us showed surprise or betrayed our emotion when it came, as it did come on Thursday, August 31st, just six days after we had gone to La Baule. Robert's class was called to the colors, he would have to leave us the following day.

That afternoon, I took pictures on the beach in front of our hotel. Of Robert. Of Robert alone, of Robert with the baby. Pictures I knew I would need and treasure during the next lonely and difficult months. And now, after four years, those snapshots, as I look at them, awake for me poignant memories of our last day of Peace spent at La Baule.

That evening, Robert wrote a long letter to his mother. He told her that he was leaving to be mobilized the next day. He said that he would like to have the comfort of knowing that his wife and baby would be safe while he was away. That he considered there was only one place we should be and that was at L'Ormeau. He had not forgotten, he said, that we had agreed not to go there, but, since these circumstances were unusual and beyond our control, our agreement could be abrogated, he thought. He asked his parents, as a last request before he left for what probably would be War, to try to make things as easy for us as they could. He hoped that they would come to know and be fond of me, and he knew they would be enchanted with Rose-Hélène.

Whatever they did for us, his wife and baby, they would be doing for him, their loving son, Robert.

When he left on Friday morning, September 1st, Robert went with the confidence and the conviction that his mother would reply soon to his letter; would write, that is, to me, advising me what to do, where to go, would give, probably, her and my father-in-law's consent to Rose-Hélène's and my going to L'Ormeau. I went to the station to see my husband off, leaving the baby in bed at the hotel. There Robert and I parted, I hoping I was being very brave, but not feeling so at all. He promised that he would be back soon—there wouldn't be war, there mustn't be. But, two days after he left, war was declared and Rose-Hélène and I were alone at the Armoric Hotel in La Baule.

I say alone, which, of course, was not quite the case. There were other guests in the Armoric Hotel and soon, Americans began arriving there from all parts of France, to await repatriation. Among them were James A. Worden and his mother. Jimmie intended to see his mother off from Bordeaux for America, then he himself would go to Paris to see what he could do about the war. Some were a bit frightened, some

even panicky at the idea of being caught in Europe with a war on. But they were Americans, and it was a comfort to me their being there, and Rose-Hélène's sunny smile and gay spirits improved the morale of us all. However, these Americans were leaving soon for America. Rose-Hélène and I were remaining in France—but where?

Three weeks passed after Robert left, and no word came from any member of his family. Didier was mobilized and at the front somewhere, Michel also. Robert had sent me a post card ten days after he left La Baule to say that his regiment was leaving for the front, and I had heard nothing from him since. I realized that, since so long a time had elapsed since the receipt of Robert's letter, his family intended to ignore it, and that no word of any kind would ever come from them. I would, therefore, have to make my own decision as to where Rose-Hélène and I were to go. We certainly could not stay in a seaside hotel for the duration of the war. Paris did not seem to be the place to live with a baby, as one could not be sure about bombings, food, and so on. L'Ormeau was the logical place, the only place for us to go. After all, it was our house, although it had not yet become our home; it did belong, legally, to us, and Rose-Hélène and I had a perfect right to go there. Its very isolation would provide the security everyone sought during those first days of war when no one knew what would happen; there would be no food problems, and the climate would be ideal for the baby.

So I made my decision. Rose-Hélène and I would go to L'Ormeau.

I wrote Robert of my intention, hoped he would approve; I wrote the family lawyer, asked him to notify Véronique, the old housekeeper, that we would soon be arriving, and asked him to explain to my family-in-law what I was about to do. I then wrote our friend, Julie, who, with her husband, had an estate not far from L'Ormeau, and asked her if she and Jean could come for us in their car and take us to L'Ormeau. Trains were not running for civilians those days. They came, Julie and Jean, one Sunday afternoon toward the end of September. Rose-Hélène and I bade the Armoric Hotel and those Americans who were still there, good-bye, and we departed for L'Ormeau.

PART TWO

Fall of France

I

IT was a long drive from La Baule to Montigny, the village near which L'Ormeau was situated. I wondered how we would be received, Rose-Hélène and I, by the old housekeeper, Véronique, who commanded the healthy respect, if not the fear, of everyone in the family, even my father-in-law, Robert had told me. Véronique had lived there so long that she regarded L'Ormeau as hers. She had arrived there at the age of eighteen, Robert had related, to be the grandmother's personal maid. When the grandmother died in 1927, Uncle Robert was left at L'Ormeau; when the uncle died in 1933, Véronique was left the sole occupant of the chateau, with her husband, Charles, the head gardener. She tied in ribbons and put away in lavender the eighty pairs of linen sheets that are at L'Ormeau, she polished all the silver, of which she was fiercely proud, and put it tenderly away; the rugs and blankets, and the wardrobes which had belonged to various members of the family—as far back as the grandfather—were watched over with passionate care. Véronique could, Robert had told me, neither read nor write, but she was one of the most intelligent persons he had ever known, being able to perform lightning mathematical calculations in her little head which put Robert to shame. She had a sharp wit, sound judgment, unflinching loyalty and unshrinking courage—all burning like a flame in the soul of one tiny person not more than five feet high and weighing no more than ninety pounds. She had lived at L'Ormeau for forty-six years and she had never left the chateau for even one night, and she probably would never leave it until she died. So I knew that it was important that I win the respect of this little person, but I quailed at the thought of the reception we would probably get from her.

I wondered, also, how the peasants of Robert's farms and villages

would behave toward me. They surely would have heard the gossip about the strained relations which existed between the two chateaux owned by the Vignys, father and son, and they must have known that I was the cause of the estrangement. I had no idea how I ought to behave toward these peasants. I knew so little about France and had never talked to a French peasant in my life. I dreaded facing their curious and, I was sure, their hostile eyes, and I wondered how I could overcome the hostility of these peasants when it would be almost impossible for me to talk to them, since I could scarcely speak their language. Robert and I had always spoken English together, and I could speak only a few words of French, could understand very little of what was spoken or written in that so difficult language.

I wondered, too, how my family-in-law would react to this rather high-handed move of mine, while realizing that it would not tend to endear me to them.

Well, it was too late to worry about all that now; the die was cast, and we were, Julie announced, approaching the village of Montigny. Rose-Hélène was, by that time, sleeping peacefully in my arms. I leaned forward to see the little hamlet which was, I knew, more or less ruled by the chateau of L'Ormeau. We were on a paved side road which had turned off the main highway a few miles back, and this road became Montigny's main street; the town boasted another artery but that was only a dirt road. Julie showed me the points of interest of our little village. "Here, on our right, is the school, which Robert provides for the little girls of the community and which you will probably have to visit." I flinched at this unhappy prospect. "On the left is the church which you will, of course, attend every Sunday and every religious holiday; you will occupy, I *hope* with grace and distinction, the family pew which you will readily identify, for it is the only one in the church which has cushions; they are of red plush. There, just beyond the church, is the post office, which Robert owns—and look! There are the peasants standing in the doorways to see the chatelaine of L'Ormeau pass." Yes, there they were, solemn-faced, dressed in their Sunday best; the women in black dresses and wearing the peasant caps of that region, towering monuments of stiffly starched lace and muslin. The men were in sober black also, looking uncomfortable and out of character in their formal clothes. I smiled uncertainly at them, not knowing exactly what to do, but their faces did not change expression. I was glad that I was inside

the car, that we did not stop, and that I was not obliged to speak to them.

We drove on, through the village, and turned off the main thoroughfare into a side road which led, Jean told me, to L'Ormeau. My heart beat faster as we drove along that winding lane, for it was no more than that. There were more stone houses along here, and more peasants but I was scarcely aware of them for Julie said, pointing at some towers which could be seen through a grove of trees on our left, "There, Margaret, is L'Ormeau. Welcome home!" I thought Rose-Hélène ought to be awakened for this momentous occasion, so I woke her and told her we were arriving at Papa's house and she must be a good girl and say *bonjour* nicely to the people she would see there. She stretched sleepily and yawned as we drove through the pillars which marked the entrance to L'Ormeau and along the driveway which wound through the large park. There were what appeared to be the stables on our left and, near them, the greenhouses. The trees were magnificent and the influence of the Gulf Stream, which came in close to that part of the French coast which was only a short distance from L'Ormeau, could be seen in the rhododendrons, the fine boxwood and the palm trees which grew in profusion on the estate. Then the chateau came into view. It seemed to me to be unfriendly and forbidding and it appeared to stiffen itself against the arrival of these two interlopers. It certainly did not look like home to me and I did not feel, at that moment, as though I would ever belong to it or it to me. Oh, why have we come here? I wailed inwardly as we drove up before the front entrance of L'Ormeau.

There, on the stone steps stood the family lawyer who lived at Soullance, the village near which was Les Chênes (he had made several trips to Paris from there for the conferences we had had), and beside him, a tiny, stern figure. She wore, over her black silk dress, a long, snowy white apron, starched to within an inch of its life. On her head was her peasant's coif, but she wore it like a tiara. I knew that this could be none other than Véronique who was waiting to receive Monsieur Robert's wife and child. I saw the fire that flashed in her fine old eyes, how straightly she stood there, and I knew that the confidence and respect of this little person would be well worth winning, but I could see that she was having none of us that first day.

I gave, I hoped, no sign of my inner confusion and terror as we got out of the car. Julie and Jean greeted Véronique and the lawyer, whom they both knew, then the lawyer presented Véronique to me. She bowed

respectfully and murmured a *bonjour, Madame*, her figure relaxing somewhat as her eye fell upon Rose-Hélène in my arms. I even detected a tear which she hastily wiped away as she looked at this baby, whose Papa Véronique had known when he was just this age—and now he was a soldier at the front. Rose-Hélène beamed at the old woman, whom any baby would recognize as being the kind of person who liked children, and she held out her little hand as she lisped *bonjour*. While they were getting acquainted, I said good-bye to Julie and Jean who were tactfully going on their way, leaving me to handle the situation alone. Véronique then led us into the chateau, where I talked for a few minutes with the lawyer. He said that we would begin receiving our income the next month and that we would need it as there were so many things to be done at L'Ormeau. There was no electricity, I would need a telephone and a car and—well, I would see for myself when I began looking around, just how much had to be done before the place could be made livable. And for a woman used to American comforts and conveniences, he added, smiling at me—at, not with, me. He told me to let him know when or if I needed advice or help of any kind and departed, leaving Rose-Hélène and me alone with Véronique.

She then began taking us on a tour of inspection of some of the rooms on the ground floor of the chateau, obviously believing that that was what was expected of her, but I told her that what interested me most was a bed into which I could put Rose-Hélène as soon as she could be given her supper. When we reached the top of the broad, winding staircase, Véronique turned to me, saying with ill-disguised rancor, "It is a fine property which Madame has here at L'Ormeau."

I almost gasped at the unexpectedness of this direct attack but replied quietly, "Yes, I can see that, but it is my husband I would prefer to have, Véronique." She made no answer, but I knew that she had understood and there were no further innuendoes that day from her.

She showed me three bedrooms, the others being closed and I did not ask to see them. I selected one of the three for myself and another across the hall for Rose-Hélène. A crib which, Véronique told me, Robert's father had slept in as a baby, had been prepared for her, with tiny embroidered linen sheets, and into this bed I put her, after she had eaten her supper. Véronique appeared in the doorway as I was kissing Rose-Hélène good night and told me that she would stay with the baby while I ate my dinner. I thanked her but assured her that that would not be necessary, we could both go down and leave her, she would go

to sleep alone. Véronique looked at me in amazement and disbelief. Would that eighteen months old baby stay there alone in the dark, in a strange and rather musty room, in this big chateau with its huge rooms and high ceilings, all of which was so unfamiliar and must have seemed overwhelming to so small a baby? Of course she would, I told Véronique, and of course she did. Véronique never forgot that episode and she always told everyone, no matter how many children that person might have had, that Rose-Hélène was the most remarkable child she had ever seen or known, and that she realized that fact the very first night she saw her.

II

We lived very quietly, Rose-Hélène and I, at L'Ormeau. The weather was fine, so we stayed out of doors mostly, in the really beautiful park which sloped down to a small lake. There were walks to take along the country roads, and through the woods which surrounded the estate. It was October and all Nature was at its loveliest, that melancholy loveliness of autumn. I, too, was in a melancholy mood. I was lonely and depressed without my husband, alone in a strange land that was at war, alone in a strange country where there was a little private war in which I was the enemy. I had had no news from Robert for several weeks and did not know where he was. I had no idea what was going on in the outside world for, there being no electricity in the chateau, there was no radio. No English newspapers came to our little town, and I got very little out of the French papers.

America and my friends there seemed very far away.

I made no effort to investigate the chateau, and made no reference to the many rooms which were closed and locked. My indifference was sincere, not assumed, for I did not regard L'Ormeau as a home but only as a temporary shelter while Robert was away. I soon became aware, however, that I had, unconsciously, adopted the tactics best suited to winning Véronique's confidence and approval. A few days after we had been at L'Ormeau, Véronique suggested that Rose-Hélène would be better off in a room which connected with mine, the door of which had previously been locked. This room had been the uncle's and was therefore considered sacrosanct, but Véronique had judged Rose-Hélène as being worthy of occupying the room. "Worthy" is a feeble word to

describe Véronique's adoration of the small Rose-Hélène. So the bachelor uncle's bedroom was transformed into a baby's nursery, and it was a pleasanter arrangement than having Rose-Hélène across the hall from me.

Two or three weeks after we had arrived at L'Ormeau, I noticed a key in the lock of another hitherto locked door. I understood that Véronique intended that I should unlock that door and enter what I knew had been the grandmother's apartments. When I went in, the room was dark, but I opened the shutters—and there was everything just as the grandmother had left it when she died twelve years before. A pair of glasses lay on the night table beside the big canopied bed; a handkerchief was on a bureau; there was some unfinished tapestry work on another table. I took one hasty look around and hurried out, leaving the shutters open, closing and relocking the door. I thought of that room that night, and of the many other locked rooms in the chateau, as I snuggled deeper into my own canopied bed, and was glad of the live presence of Rose-Hélène in the next room.

Each day after that, I would find another key in the lock of still another door, and I knew that I had won Véronique's confidence if not yet her approval and liking, and that she was turning the chateau over to me. Without a word being spoken on the subject by either Véronique or me, she gave me, one by one, the keys of which she had been the keeper for eight years. Room by room, the chateau of L'Ormeau came into my possession; little by little, I became the mistress of Robert's estate.

I then began exploring and getting acquainted with L'Ormeau. The chateau, inside, was simply unbelievable. Nothing had been discarded since the death of Robert's grandmother and she had kept, with true French thrift, most of the grandfather's possessions, so there was the accumulation of years in the trunks and closets and store rooms. There were hats and shoes, shirts, ties, handkerchiefs, by the score, as well as quantities of overcoats, suits and underwear, which had all belonged to the grandfather and uncle. The grandmother's complete wardrobe must have been there. Among other items, I found dozens of dresses bearing the labels of famous Parisian dressmakers, with voluminous skirts containing yards and yards of rich fabrics, brocaded silk, embroidered damask, taffeta, and so on. There were priceless laces with bits of paper, brittle and yellow with age, pinned to the various pieces to tell the kind of lace they were. There were handsome Paisley shawls; yards of material, linen, silk, and cotton, enough to make quantities

of dresses; dozens of fans; a few furs which, due to Véronique's vigilance, had escaped the ravages of moths. There was jewelry too, most of it good, all of it out of date.

In addition to these thrilling and fascinating discoveries, I found quantities of useless objects. Apparently neither the grandmother nor the uncle had ever destroyed one letter they had ever received, and the grandmother had had a passion for collecting postcards, of which there were literally thousands carefully stacked away. There were myriads of photographs; knickknacks; souvenirs of every description; empty boxes. There was everything imaginable and unimaginable. I wished, as I made amazing finds, that I could have a group of my American friends at L'Ormeau. We would play a game: we would name any object we could think of, then begin searching the chateau for it. I was certain that that object would be found, no matter what it was. I knew that it would be unwise for me to antagonize Véronique by turning the chateau inside out during the first few weeks of our stay there, but I longed to throw or give away many of the things I found miserly or uselessly stored away.

The chateau, when we arrived, had a funereal air. One could feel that people had died there, but, since Rose-Hélène and I now had to live there, something had to be done about giving the place a more cheerful atmosphere. The uncle's cape which he had always worn when he went out for a stroll in the park, had been kept hanging reverently in the great hall, and his felt hat which had a feather stuck jauntily in the band. As soon as I dared, I took them down and put them away in a closet. In the grand salon, there were sixteen chairs (I counted them) arranged in a circle, as for a séance. I was sure that the ancestors held mass meetings there during the night when the house was so dark and still, to discuss this American who had come to desecrate their old home. So I moved the furniture about, just to break the spell. Those ancestors had been in possession long enough, now it was our turn. There were about thirty-five rooms in the chateau; I did something to every one of them. In the grandmother's room, for instance, there was a chaise longue; it was upon this that she had died because she would not permit a doctor to see her in bed. I sent that away to be re-upholstered and covered in a chintz which would match one of the guest rooms. Most of the furniture was good. There were some nice Louis Quinze and Louis Seize pieces, but there were some *objets d'art* so called, which deserved to be in a chamber of horrors. I still shudder when I think of a little ebony Nubian

boy, with red and gold trappings. He was about 3½ feet high and he used to leer at me from a corner of the great hall until I had the courage to banish him to the attic. Poor old Véronique almost had to take to her bed when she saw me relegating what she had always considered prize works of art to the darkest corners of the top floor. She never uttered a word of protest, however. She had accepted me as the mistress, she was only the servant even though she had been there forty-six years and I only two months, and she let me make whatever changes I wished. After I had rearranged the rooms according to my American taste, she admitted that the chateau was more cheerful than it had ever been, and I began to be rather fond of the place.

But now it was time to turn my attention to the practical problems it presented, the most important of which was that of electricity. Uncle Robert had begun the installation but the cables and wires had got only as far as the stables when he died and the work was, of course, abandoned. It was a nightly terror to me, having to climb the stairs every night, kerosene lamp in hand, when I went up, alone, to bed with impenetrable darkness before me, creepy shadows behind me, silence all around. I was afraid that I might drop the lamp some night, then we would have a fire on our hands, with the nearest fire department twenty miles away.

By using American methods, in very bad French, I got the electricity installed in record time. Lights were soon blazing triumphantly from the chateau. I then bought a radio and could listen to the news, could listen to music during the long, lonely evenings when Rose-Hélène was asleep above, Véronique and Charles and the other servants asleep below, and I the only person in the place awake. No one understood how I got the electricity installed so quickly, nor do I, now that I know more about Robert's country and the tempo of its life.

There was a bit of trouble getting the telephone installed, but finally it was done. I then bought a car, a tiny Rosengart roadster, the khaki top of which was so low, I had to stoop to get into the car. It consumed only one gallon of gasoline every thirty-five miles, which was a blessing with the gasoline ration of eight gallons a month. Small as the car was, it functioned perfectly and never once failed me on any of the trips I took in it. I could then go, occasionally, to spend the day at Julie's with Rose-Hélène. The Vernays' chateau was not more than ten miles from ours and they had two dear little girls with whom Rose-Hélène delighted to play. Julie and Jean (the latter, Robert's most intimate friend) intro-

duced me to a number of their friends, some of whom I liked very much, so my days were rather less lonely after I got the car than they had been before when we had been unable to leave L'Ormeau, even to go to the village. The mayor had come to call, so had the two teachers of our school, but no one else, and it was weeks before I learned that it was I who should make the first call on our various neighbors, the etiquette of France being, in that respect, the reverse of the conventions in this country. This was rather awkward for me, as I could not be certain as to just which families were willing to receive me, many of them being intimate friends of my family-in-law's. But, with Julie's help, I felt my way along, and gradually became acquainted with many of the people of Robert's country.

I wondered afterward how we ever got through that first winter of 1939-40, which was one of the coldest in the history of France. Rose-Hélène and I had been used to the usual seventy degrees of steam heat, and warm bathrooms. At L'Ormeau, the salon never got warmer than forty degrees all winter, and that was with a raging fire in the fireplace, with the thermometer on the mantelpiece. Our bedrooms were thirty degrees, never warmer, and, as for bathrooms, there were none. There was one room which had nothing in it but an antiquated papier-mâché tub which sat majestically in the middle of the room. The grandmother had taken her baths there, the servants carrying quantities of hot and cold water up two flights of stairs to fill the tub. I believe that the room was proudly called the *salle de bain* but, to my American mind, it took more than one detached tub to make a bathroom; a few pipes and things were needed to give the place any utility or charm. I decided that we would adopt the bowl-and-pitcher method of keeping clean. When the cold weather arrived, I closed all the rooms of the chateau except my salon and a breakfast room and our two bedrooms. It was a punishment to go out of one of those heated rooms into the great hall which was always freezing, the stair-well rising to the three-storied height of the chateau; we almost had to put on our coats and gloves when we wanted to go up or down stairs.

Véronique engaged a young peasant girl, Cécile, to help me with Rose-Hélène, and to do the other work. The "other work" I discovered, consisted of: lighting a fire in my bedroom and Rose-Hélène's each morning and evening; giving the baby her breakfast; bringing my breakfast tray when I rang for it; washing our clothes and ironing them; carrying wood up to the bedrooms and into the salon and breakfast

room; carrying water, hot and cold, to my dressing room; doing my bedroom and the baby's; serving our meals (and she remembered always to serve from the left!); washing the dishes; cleaning and dusting the rooms that were open, polishing the floors. In her "spare time," she mended the baby's clothes or took Rose-Hélène out in the park for an airing. For time off, she had every other Sunday afternoon from two to six. I paid her two hundred francs a month—five dollars. I wanted to pay her more but I did not dare; I would have lost face with the people of our community whose respect I was trying so hard to win; Cécile would not have done her work any better and she would have respected me less. So I compromised with my conscience and engaged a laundress (the sheets and heavy things were washed in a little brook which flowed through the estate, the finer clothes in a pool in the middle of the vegetable garden). I got a boy to carry the wood and clean the fireplaces, and a woman to come once a week to do the heavy cleaning.

I was very pleased with Cécile. Rose-Hélène adored her, and the girl worked from morning to night with never a word or a thought of complaint. She was, I thought, a treasure. Then, one day, an incident occurred which distressed me deeply. Véronique came to me, in the salon, her face very serious. She had, she said, something she must tell me. I closed the door; we were alone but, even so, Véronique spoke in a whisper. "It is about Cécile," she said darkly. My heart sank. Did Cécile go out nights to meet boys, did she steal—what could it be? Receiving my solemn assurance that what she was about to tell me would go no farther, Véronique whispered dramatically, "*Madame, elle lit, Cécile.*" I did not at once grasp what she meant, my French still being a bit shaky. I knew that "*lit*" meant "bed" in French, and I tried to work out around that noun what Cécile was doing. Then I realized that "*lit*" was also the verb "to read" in the third person singular. "You mean Cécile *reads*? Reads books?" Véronique nodded gravely. "Yes, Madame. I have told her she must not do it. I reminded her that such things are for the master and the mistress but not for us. Still, she persists in doing it—what shall we do?" I was horrified, but not along the same line of reasoning as old Véronique. That incident revealed to me the mentality of the people of Robert's country, who are living and working as their grandfathers did. They plow the fields with primitive plows drawn by sleepy oxen, thresh the grain in community gathers. The twelve farms belonging to L'Ormeau were rented to as many families, some of whom had lived in Robert's farmhouses for

three generations. All paid rent to the chateau twice a year and the money was always ready and cheerfully paid. In addition the peasants gave to the chateau so much butter, poultry, wheat, and wool.

In return the chateau kept the buildings in repair and maintained a friendly and benevolent protection over the tenants. I was expected to visit and take presents to the newborn babies, attend christenings, weddings and funerals, call on a family in case of illness and visit school where eighty little girls were being given their education.

I was not especially nervous about my first school visit for I did not realize it was of importance. I remembered it at the last moment, hastily grabbed a mangy old fur coat I wore about the place and ran, hatless, for the car.

Two women who were really nuns (the laws of the Third Republic forbade their wearing robes) met me at the door of the school, greeted me effusively, and led me to a classroom. I was startled to find all the eighty little girls assembled there.

All rose to their feet, looked at me and said in unison, "*bonjour, notre bienfaitrice.*"

I felt and looked like anything but a benefactress. I longed to turn and run. I stood there, having no idea what I was supposed to do next, unable to speak more than a few faltering words of French, and at the mercy of those eighty pairs of eyes. To my utter horror a little girl entered the room carrying roses and proceeded to deliver a long oration, not one word of which I understood. She was nervous but I was terrified; she stopped speaking and I looked wildly to the nuns for help, but they only smiled benignly. I know now I should have kissed the child on both cheeks, but perhaps she will prefer to go down in Montigny history as the only little girl who did *not* get kisses upon presenting the mistress of L'Ormeau with a bouquet. I finally stammered to the children and nuns that I was ashamed not to be able to speak French as well as these children who were so many years younger than I, but that I hoped to do better by the following year.

This was said with what I hoped was an intelligent and benevolent expression, and there was a chorus of "*Au revoir, notre bienfaitrice,*" as I left the room.

I wrote Robert that evening and asked him why he had not prepared me for some of the duties I would have to perform as the mistress of L'Ormeau. I was receiving letters from him by that time, almost daily, from his post in the Maginot Line. "Poor darling," he replied some

days later, "so you had to perform that painful duty which my mother and my grandmother always dreaded and hated!" And at least they knew how to speak French, knew what they were expected to do and say, and probably went dressed for the occasion.

My first Sunday in church was another severe trial. I had asked Véronique and Charles to go to the ten o'clock Mass with me rather than to the earlier one which they usually attended, and we drove to the village together in the little car. We took our places in the family pew, the one with the red plush cushions, I being given the corner seat which is never occupied by anyone but the master or the mistress of L'Ormeau. I fear that the curé received very little of his congregation's attention that Sunday morning, for I am sure that every eye in the church was fixed upon me. But that day I had dressed with a due regard for my appearance and for the way that I was supposed, as Robert's wife, to look. I was practically the only woman in the church who wore a hat, the others, being peasants, wore their coifs. All went well until I noticed that a basket containing bread, broken into little pieces, was being passed to the members of the congregation. What was this? I thought I knew the ritual of the Mass by that time, but this was something unfamiliar to me. Concluding that it must have to do with the Communion Service, and having no right to partake of Communion that morning since I had eaten my breakfast, I let the basket pass without taking a piece of bread. Véronique, beside me, stiffened—I could feel her vibrations—and I knew I had done the wrong thing. So, when the basket came back along our row, I took some bread and ate it as I saw everyone else doing. Later I learned that that was purely a local custom, symbolic of the liberality of the chateau toward the townspeople. And I had nearly refused to take part in this little ceremony! I made no further *faux pas* that I know of, until the end of the service. I was not certain that it *was* the end so I sat waiting for someone to make a move. No one did. Then I suddenly realized, as restive glances were cast in my direction, that I was supposed to be the first to leave. I stood up, Véronique and Charles solemnly doing the same, and we led the congregation, with great dignity, out of the church, I furious with myself for my stupidity and awkwardness.

I never made the same mistakes twice, but I did commit a great many social errors and unconsciously overthrew many local conventions during those early days of our life in Robert's country. I made dreadful mistakes in French, most of which amused, rather than irritated, my

listeners. I was obviously so completely at sea about everything that Robert's friends and the peasants were more indulgent with me than they would have been with a French person who had come there under the same handicap (being unacceptable to the parents-in-law) as I had. Since French people who came from other parts of France to that region were regarded as foreigners, I, as an American, must have been considered as being only one degree removed from the savage, but I believe that helped, rather than hindered me. Knowing how handicapped I was, being unable to speak their language well, and understanding that I could not be familiar with their social customs, my friends and neighbors forgave in me what they would not have pardoned in one of their own countrymen.

Rose-Hélène helped me tremendously in the battle of Montigny. She was such a gay, friendly little being. "*Elle n'est pas fière,*" the peasants all said of her, which was supposed to be a great compliment in that part of the country. No, she was not unfriendly. She had a smile for everyone, she was never timid or shy. She learned, very quickly, the names of many of our farmers and always spoke to them by name, to their great pride and pleasure. I always took Rose-Hélène with me when I went to visit the farms or to see the newborn babies. It was she who took presents to them and crooned over them with rapturous delight. She and I were fighting, together, the bigotry and intolerance of Robert's country; we were trying to overcome the prejudices of Robert's friends and I hoped also to soften the antagonism of his parents. And we were fighting to make of L'Ormeau a home, our home. All this I was doing, partly because the situation was a challenge to me, but mostly for my baby and husband. L'Ormeau would, some day, belong to Rose-Hélène, and I wanted her early recollections of her home to be pleasant. Robert, I knew, would feel happier if the silly family feud could come to an end, but he would not have dared take up position in the front line trenches, deep in enemy territory as Rose-Hélène and I had had to do. Perhaps, however, victory came to us sooner and more completely than it would have done had Rose-Hélène and I not gone there alone, to be at the complete mercy of the people who had been prejudiced against us.

At any rate, by the time that Robert came home for his first leave, early in January, Rose-Hélène and I had won a great deal of ground and the way had been paved for the cessation of hostilities between the two de Vigny camps.

III

What a happy reunion we had when Robert came home. The entire household revolved around Robert and his ten days' leave. The war was forgotten, the past was forgotten, the future was of no concern. All that mattered was the present, the ecstatically, gloriously happy present, with our little family reunited, and in our own home at last.

By coincidence, Didier had been given his leave at the same time as Robert. He drove over to see us from Les Chênes the morning after Robert arrived, to say that his mother and father would like Robert and me to come for lunch the following day! I felt that Didier should have carried a white flag to show that a truce was about to be discussed, for, as it was, we had no idea, when he drove up to our front door, that he was an emissary on such an important mission. We accepted the invitation, but decided not to take Rose-Hélène, since no mention had been made of her. The ordeal would have been too easy for me, in any case, with her beside me; I wanted to go through it on my own and win, if win I should, on my own merits. So, the next morning, Robert and I set forth for Les Chênes, confiding Rose-Hélène to Véronique's care for the day. After a forty-minute drive, Robert pointed to a chateau which stood in a large park at the top of a hill. It could be seen from the main road, through a clearing in the trees although it was still some distance away. *Voilà, Les Chênes!* The architecture was not at all similar to that of L'Ormeau. L'Ormeau was a rectangle, the purity of its lines being broken only by two towers at either end of the western façade, and the roof line was beautiful. Les Chênes, however, rambled in style from one period to another and appeared, from the outside, to be far less attractive than L'Ormeau. But the entrance to the estate was imposing and the park seemed, as we drove through it, even lovelier than ours. Robert and I had had so much to say to each other during the drive, we had had no time to think about what lay before us, but my subconscious mind had been gnawing on the situation and I was keyed up to such a pitch of excitement that, by the time we reached Les Chênes, my emotions had congealed and I was almost abnormally calm when we drove up to the front entrance of Robert's former home. Didier, seeing the car for which they all must have been watching, came out to welcome us. We all went into the house together and stood in the hall, waiting for the rest of the family to appear.

They came, I never knew why, singly. The door of a room on the

right of the hall opened and out came a young woman whom I knew must be Chantal. She kissed Robert, rather coldly and turned, even more coldly, toward me, for our introduction. Then from the same room came a haughty, dignified person, Robert's mother. Her features were finely chiseled and their immobility gave no indication of what she was feeling. She kissed her son, without emotion, then permitted him to present to her, her new daughter-in-law. She did not give me the shrewd, piercing look she should have given me, by all the rules of drama and fiction. I got the distinct impression that she did not see me at all; that she was, perhaps, near-sighted. And that she was so remote she was unable, even, to feel my hand in hers. She drifted away to make way for Robert's father who was emerging from the room where they all had been awaiting our arrival. He was rather flustered and nervous, for he was an easy-going person and hated, more than anything else, any kind of excitement that did not have to do with the Hunt. He detested friction, or emotional scenes, and since Robert's marriage was an established fact and nothing could now be done about it, he was anxious to get these preliminaries over with and settle peacefully down to the business of being a united family. He was rather short; he had the florid complexion I expected him to have, and his eyes which were blue, very blue, looked as though they were meant to twinkle, and that it was with great difficulty that he was then keeping the twinkle out of them. I felt that they soon would be twinkling again, those blue eyes, as my father-in-law shook hands with me, more cordially than his wife and daughter had done. I looked toward the door to see whether anyone else would appear, but that, it seemed, was all for that day. Chantal's husband was mobilized and Michel had yet to come home for his first leave. The luncheon passed pleasantly enough, Robert making most of the conversation which he kept on a neutral plane, telling about the Maginot Line and life in it. I had no time to be nervous for I was too busy trying to muster a few words of French, that I might contribute something to the conversation just to prove that I was not a complete nit-wit in addition to everything else the family might have been thinking I was. I remember poor Robert looking at me tenderly, with such infinite love and pride after I had struggled manfully through a rather long remark. "Margot does speak with an accent, but it is such a charming one, don't you think so?" he asked the table in general. Silence profound. Well, they were right, it *isn't* a charming accent, but I thought it sweet of Robert to find it so.

Before Robert and I left at the end of what had been a fairly successful day, Robert's sister invited us to come the following Sunday for lunch at her chateau which was nearby. We could then see her five children, of whom she was very proud. But we had a child too, of whom we were very proud; no one had mentioned her. So I said I was afraid we could not come, at least not without Rose-Hélène, as it was Cécile's Sunday off. Everyone looked uncomfortable—they had forgotten our baby, the little granddaughter. We suggested that they all come to L'Ormeau the following evening, and if they came early before seven o'clock, they could see Rose-Hélène before she was put to bed. They agreed to come but Robert said, as we were driving home, "You will see, they will not come early. They are always late, and this time they surely will be."

When we told Véronique that the family would be there for dinner the next evening, she wept for joy. Her beloved family reunited at last! At last, Monsieur Philippe and Madame were coming again to L'Ormeau. She would arrange the menu to include all Monsieur Philippe's favorite dishes, and she began at once, twenty-four hours in advance, to make preparations for that dinner.

At six o'clock in the evening of the following day, Robert and I were in our rooms, dressing for dinner, Rose-Hélène playing near us. Cécile came to tell us that the ladies and the gentlemen had arrived! They not only were not late, but they were one hour early. Robert went down to greet his family while I finished dressing and got Rose-Hélène ready. My father-in-law spoke of the changes I had made in the chateau, changes which he did not seem to resent having been made in his old home, and even seemed to like. Some minutes later, Rose-Hélène and I went down together. She looked angelic that evening. She was laughing and happy as always; her cheeks were flushed after a day spent out of doors; her golden hair shining and curling a bit, her eyes starry and very big and blue. She wore a pale pink dress. It was a tense moment for everyone but her when I opened the door of the salon. Five pairs of eyes were fixed upon us—or rather, upon the tiny figure at my side: Robert's proud eyes; Chantal's curious ones; Didier's friendly ones. And eyes into which the tears quickly sprang, those of Robert's mother and father as they looked, for the first time, at their son's child, their little granddaughter, twenty-two months old.

Rose-Hélène stood looking, a bit bewildered, from one to another of

these strangers. I told her to go and say *bonjour* to Madame, so she went immediately to her grandmother and held out her little hand. Robert's mother picked up her baby granddaughter, held her tightly in her arms, and kissed her, the tears running down her cheeks. We all tried not to look, tried to talk, but we couldn't find much to say. Rose-Hélène then went to each of the others, in turn, to say *bonjour*. After she had made the rounds, she looked uncertainly about her, wondering what to do next. Her eye fell upon Chantal; and, like a cat which invariably selects the only person in a room who does *not* like cats as the one upon whose lap it prefers to lie, she trotted over to her rather hostile aunt and held out her arms to be picked up. Chantal could do no other than take her little niece onto her lap where Rose-Hélène nestled down comfortably and rather sleepily. Suddenly she looked up into Chantal's face, reached up and patted her aunt's cheek. The last round of the battle of Montigny had been won—and by Rose-Hélène. My family-in-law forgot, from that evening, that they had not known our baby from the hour of her birth; she and I had become accepted members of Robert's family, and the war made it easy to forget anything as stupid and silly as that feud had been.

We saw a lot of the family during those ten days which were wonderfully happy ones. We went to Chantal's for lunch and Rose-Hélène met her five cousins who were extremely nice and well brought-up children.

We visited the school and this time I sat along the sidelines, admiring the masterful way my husband handled the situation. On Sunday morning, we went to church, a real little family of three in the red-cushioned pew, with a fourth member, Véronique, and a fifth, Charles, beside us. We visited the farms and saw many of Robert's friends. But we saved many hours of that precious ten days to be alone together at L'Ormeau, just we three. It was the first time that we had been there in our own home, and we wanted to enjoy it to the uttermost.

Robert taught Rose-Hélène to read the entire alphabet during the ten days he was at L'Ormeau. She could pick the letters out in a newspaper or magazine and tell us what they were. She had quite a large vocabulary of French words, although she had not yet spoken a sentence. It would not be long, I feared, before she would be speaking French better than her mother, so I insisted that Robert speak French with me to help me learn to speak more easily with the people of his country, none of whom spoke a word of English, and at least enable me to hold my own with the children there, including our own daughter.

IV

Those ten days came to an end all too soon; too soon Robert returned to the Maginot Line and Rose-Hélène and I were alone again at L'Ormeau. Our days were less lonely than before as we now went often to visit Chantal, where Rose-Hélène could play with her five little cousins, or to spend the day at Les Chênes. The family came to L'Ormeau, too. I did not relax my grip on the reins of our little domain, but we were on the friendliest of terms and a stranger, not knowing the story and seeing us together would not have suspected that there had ever been any trouble between us.

The evenings were as lonely as before and I found those very hard to bear. The house was still, only the sound of the radio relieving the deep silence. There was no one to talk to, nothing moved—thank goodness, for that; I would have been terrified if anything had. I made myself remember that we were at war, and that war brought hardship to everyone. At least we were in our own home—there were many who had had to evacuate theirs—we had plenty to eat, and had soft, warm beds. But we still did have to remind ourselves, there in Robert's country, in February, March and early April, 1940, that France was at war. The soldiers at the front were doing their part and Robert said that their spirit was superb, but those of us at the rear found our passive role of waiting, of complete inactivity, a difficult one to play. There was almost no war work women could do. There were no wounded, no convalescents, no military hospitals in our part of the country. I did sometimes think, during the long and lonely evenings, of the possibility of France's losing the war. I did not admit that France could lose, but I tried to picture what would happen to us if she did. Daladier had said, in a speech he made on the 31st of January, "Hitler does not only conquer, he destroys and kills the conquered." Remembering what had happened to landowners, to Catholic landowners in Poland and Czechoslovakia, I felt that L'Ormeau, and we in it, were doomed if Germany did conquer France. Of course, I was an American, and Rose-Hélène too. She had dual nationality, for I had had her registered at the American Consulate in Paris three weeks after her birth, which gave her the right to be on my American passport, and made of her an American citizen, at least until she was fourteen years old. Still, I did not see how being Americans could help us, and I

occasionally wondered, fearfully, what Hitler's soldiers would do to us in case of France's defeat.

Rose-Hélène's second birthday, on March 22nd, made me ponder even more deeply over this question. I knew that France had the finest army in the world, and Robert said that the Maginot Line was impregnable to any attack. It seemed ridiculous, therefore, to be thinking of France in terms of defeat, but I did want to envisage all the possibilities because of my baby. I had to protect and safeguard her future. I hoped, if the worst should come, to be able to send her to America. I thought I would persuade Robert of the advisability of sending to my country a sum of money large enough to pay for Rose-Hélène's passage to and her life in the United States. The weather had become warmer, so I could venture into those rooms which had been closed all winter, so I began packing into special trunks, those things I would want to send to America with Rose-Hélène. This was not clairvoyance on my part, nor perspicacity; probably if I had lived less alone and had had less time to think, or had lived more with the French and been influenced by them to a greater degree, the thought would probably have never occurred to me that France could be defeated. There was never any thought of *my* leaving France; I had chosen to marry Robert, my home was in France, at L'Ormeau, my duty was to remain in our home and near my husband, and I knew I would stay, no matter what happened. But I did not want my child to be the victim of her mother's romantic, and Hitler's ambitious, desires.

And so I figured, and planned, those lonely evenings, what I would do with Rose-Hélène—if. I did not voice these doubts of France's invulnerability to anyone, I was ashamed of them, and I wrote, one day, in my diary: "But how silly of me to be thinking and writing about our being defeated. I might better concentrate upon bringing up our child, and leave the French to win the war, as they will do."

On March 31, Robert unexpectedly came home for another ten days' leave. Spring was early that year and L'Ormeau and the surrounding countryside was lovely. We walked through the park and our woods together, Robert, the baby and I. Little, tender wood flowers were out, there was a delicious, an earthy smell. We drank in the fragrance and the beauty, we rejoiced in the alive feeling that Spring gives one. Robert pointed out to me a little evergreen tree which had been planted by his grandmother and all the family, with appropriate ceremonies, in 1919, to commemorate the victory of the Allies. For some reason,

the victory tree had never grown and, as Robert and I stood looking at it, we remarked that it was symbolical of that victory of 1918. "After this war is won," Robert said, "we will plant another tree. We will give that new one all the 'living room' it needs, so it will flourish. Its life must not be the gasping struggle for survival that this one has been."

One gloriously happy day of that leave, we drove to the seaside; other days, we saw Robert's family, there being no strain this time and all of us enjoying being together. We visited, he and I, as before, our farmers, sitting with them at the long, bare tables in their one and two-room stone houses, drinking their *vin du pays* with them. Robert could not believe, he said, that he had been killing men only a few hundred miles from there, so quiet and peaceful were the villages and town of his country. The fact remained, however, that there was a war and that he had to go back to it. As before, the ten days, supremely happy ones, passed all too quickly and the 9th of April came, the end of his leave.

That evening, just before we went out to get into the car to drive to the city of X. from where Robert took the train to rejoin his regiment, we tuned in the radio to get the latest news. We looked at one another, aghast and in fear at what we had heard. German troops had occupied Denmark and had landed in Norway at Oslo and Narvik! What would that mean for the future of Europe, for our own future? We drove to X., our hearts heavy, not only with the pain of parting, but with apprehension. We talked little on that drive through the dark and peaceful countryside; we were afraid. We dreaded the developments of the next days and weeks. We felt, we knew, that the "phony war" had ended, that the real war was about to begin. We kissed one another good-bye in the railroad station at X. late that evening. We clung together, I longing to have the protection of my husband's strong arms always, longing to keep him safe with me forever. But we parted, as husbands and wives, as mothers and sons, and as sweethearts have had to part. Robert left me standing, alone, on the station platform. I felt a premonition, as I watched the train move slowly out of the station, that it would be a long time before I should see my beloved husband again.

V

I spent the night of Robert's departure in the city of X., and went to Paris the next day. I intended to spend a week or two there, to ease

myself over that first difficult period of adjustment which always follows a separation from someone one deeply loves. I just did not have the courage, that time, to face L'Ormeau without Robert, so soon after he had gone. Rose-Hélène was all right with Véronique and Cécile, and I thought it best to return to her when she would have (outwardly at least) a more smiling and cheerful mother.

Paris was in gayer spirits than when I had last seen it in August, just before the war. Life seemed quite normal, except for the food and drink restrictions. The women looked more chic than they had looked for years, it seemed to me, but perhaps that was because I had been living, for seven months, in the country where no one paid very much attention to clothes. Nearly every woman in Paris wore the emblem of her husband's or her fiancé's regiment in her lapel, but I could see no fear in their eyes. Hitler did not appear to have made even a dent in the morale of the Parisians, and did not seem to have gained an inch in the war of nerves.

I stayed in our apartment which was on the top floor of a building overlooking the Etoile, and all of Paris. The view was magnificent; one could see, in the distance, the Sacré Coeur, and the Eiffel Tower and, in the foreground, the Arc de Triomphe. One night, at 3 A.M., I was awakened by a noise that sounded like thunder. So suddenly had I been awakened, I could not, for the moment, realize where I was. Then I remembered. I was in Paris, and that certainly was the sound of guns, of anti-aircraft guns, probably. I rushed to the window and looked out. The anti-aircraft batteries were firing away like anything, one of them being on top of the Arc de Triomphe. Then I heard planes, but there was no *alerte*—I learned afterward that there had been only four or five German planes over Paris that night, and an *alerte* was not sounded for less than ten planes. The noise of the planes and the roar and rattle of the guns made a deep impression upon me, fresh from the country where all had been so peaceful and still. It was my first sight and sound of war. I stood there alone, looking out of the window and I thought, "This, then, is War. This is the noise Robert has been hearing every day, every night, for eight months. This is the noise which means that men are trying to kill men." I watched the bursting of the bombs, like fireworks, really quite pretty, then, some seconds after, would come the noise of the explosion. The searchlights, from every corner of the city, explored the sky with long fingers, searching for the enemy planes. Their beams had converged, they were focusing on one point. That

must have been where the planes were, but I could not see them. The street lamps were burning dimly, casting faint pools of yellow light on the pavements. There was the Eternal Flame, burning brightly at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, under the Arc de Triomphe. I felt more pity for him at that moment, this Unknown Soldier of the war of 1914, than I had ever felt before, as I stood looking down upon his tomb, as I listened to the sounds that signified that he had, after all, died in vain.

That was my first experience of hearing the sound of guns. I was to hear that sound often, later, but that first time will remain in my memory, always.

When I returned to L'Ormeau, I found that the Germans had taken to flying over our part of France. We had no defenses against their planes, no anti-aircraft guns, no air fields, no patrolling defense planes. The first day after my return, I heard a terrific noise overhead; I ran out of doors and there were three enormous planes flying just over our tree-tops. They flew so low I could almost see the men sitting in the cockpits, and I could read the numbers and see the black swastikas painted on the undercarriage and wings of the planes.

We could only watch them helplessly as they flew over our homes.

VI

One Sunday morning early in May, it was announced in church that evacuees would soon be arriving from northern France. We all were asked to make preparations to receive them; L'Ormeau was assigned twenty-two.

All day Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday, we worked, getting ready for them. I requisitioned some of the wives of our farmers to help clean the stables which were given a thorough scrubbing, dusting and polishing. There had been no horses in the stables for years and, after the dust and cobwebs had been removed, they were as suitable for living quarters as most of the houses in which the peasants lived. Beds were then set up in the several box stalls, and, should there be large families who would want to be together, the former saddle room and coachman's room would do very nicely for them. We put tables, chairs, washbowls and pitchers, mirrors and candles in the various rooms; blankets, pillows and coarse linen sheets were put on the beds,

towels were left in each room. I wanted the place to look as though we were welcoming these people, not merely taking them in because we had to. Chairs and small tables were put on a covered terrace which overlooked the stable yard; this would be a pleasant place for them to eat, and the stable yard, where the grass had been freshly cut, would be ideal as a play yard for the babies and children.

So when, two or three days later, the first evacuees arrived in Montigny, we were ready for them. Hearing that they had arrived, I drove to the village to see whether there was anything I could do to help them. I found them, standing in a pathetic little group, in front of the *Mairie*, waiting to be told what to do next. I stopped my car and stared, unable, for the moment, to speak to them. That little group was, to me, the symbol of War. Of any war, of all wars, of the war of 1939 which had, at last, come to Robert's country in the person of these helpless victims of it. I saw in them all the horrors and savagery of war; I saw the men, women and children of Poland and Czechoslovakia and all the other victimized countries—and the sight struck deeply into my heart. There were exhausted mothers, with babies in their arms, and frightened children clinging to their skirts; there were old men, old enough to remember the war of 1870, and to have fought in the war of 1914; and old women whose husbands had fought in that first war, who had lost sons in the second, and whose grandsons were fighting in the present one—the third war in seventy years to be fought between France and Germany. One of the babies appeared to have been born no more than a few weeks before; one of the old men must have been over eighty years old. They were simple people who understood almost nothing of what the war was about. Danzig, the Sudetenland, "living room," the lies and false promises of dictators, the defense of creeds and ideals—what was all this to them? All they knew was that they had been driven from homes which they probably would never see again; that they had been machine-gunned in trains and buses, or along the roads they had so wearily trudged, and that one quarter of their original number had been so killed; that they had slept in ditches, in the woods, had traveled for days, in anything that would bring them to our Department to which they had been ordered to come. They looked completely bewildered, incapable of thought or of further action.

There was food ready for them when they arrived at L'Ormeau, with plenty of milk for the children. They were pitifully grateful, for they had not had, they told me, a hot meal for days. One of the mothers looked

about the stables which did look clean and inviting, and exclaimed, "Oh, how fortunate we have been, Madame, to have been assigned to your home!" Not a word about the misfortune of their having had to come there at all. None of them, in fact, uttered one word of complaint.

Some of the women had walked all the way from the Belgian frontier to Paris, a distance of some two hundred miles. It had taken them ten days. There were some Polish refugees among them. They had fled, in 1939, from Poland to Belgium and then, less than a year later, they had had to take to the road again. Many of them had been bombed both in Poland and in France. I wondered how these women, many of whom did not look very strong, could survive their experiences, mentally and physically. I suppose it was because they had to, for nearly all of them had children. Mothers find hidden reserves of strength and courage when they have small children who are dependent upon them.

One woman had left two of her children beside a road in northern France. They had been killed by machine guns as they trudged along at their mother's side. Other planes were coming over, she told me in a dazed kind of way, the enemy armies were not far behind, they had to hurry. So there was no time to bury the children, they were placed tenderly in the tall grass and left there.

A tragic drama took place in our little railroad station at Montigny. One woman who, like the others, had had to flee from her home, near Namur, had been told to go to Anduze, a town near Montigny. She had nine children and was about to have a tenth. She had had to walk, with the nine children, many of the hundreds of miles, but had occasionally found room in a bus or a train for herself and her brood. She was on the train, near Montigny, when she realized that her new baby was about to be born. She was taken off the train, and installed in the station of our little village, her children being lodged with various townspeople. The baby was born almost at once, a little girl who lived just an hour or so, long enough to be given a name, and be blessed. The mother died too, the following morning, in the railroad station and she and her baby girl were buried in the Montigny cemetery. The nine children, frightened and unhappy, stayed in the peasant homes which gave them shelter. They did not know where their father was; he had been helping with the evacuation work, and they had not seen

him since a day or so before their departure from Namur. Their home had been bombarded and destroyed.

Most of the refugees had, of course, very little clothing. The mayors of the various communities asked people to contribute whatever they could to help clothe these men, women and children. I remembered the complete wardrobes of Robert's grandparents and uncle, and was glad, then, that those clothes had been saved all those years. I turned out trunks, went through drawers and closets, to select suitable things to give to the evacuees. They were more than grateful for what I gave them, but the men looked tragi-comical in those clothes. It looked incongruous enough to see refugees, most of whom were peasants, dressed up in clothes of the greatest elegance and finest cut, which had not been altered to fit them, but, the ludicrous effect was heightened by the fact that all the clothes had been out of date for at least nine years, some of them for twenty-five years. If a visitor from some other land, where it was not known that there was a war in Europe, should suddenly have found himself in Montigny, he would have been completely bewildered to see peasants wearing derby hats, shoes with pointed toes, Prince Albert or cutaway coats, striped trousers, embroidered shirts. The town was full of penniless, homeless men wearing the finest clothes that money could buy but completely passé! The women and children fared a bit better, for I gave some of my own and Rose-Hélène's clothes to them, and many of the grandmother's simpler dresses were altered to fit the women and made over for the children.

VII

There were three million evacuees in our Department and one ghastly fact which filled us with terror was that we could not be sure which of them were to be pitied and which were to be feared. There could so easily have been spies or Fifth Columnists, disguised parachute troops, among the people we were taking into our homes. Before the evacuees had descended upon our quiet and peaceful countryside, every stranger was noticed and there had always been someone who knew from where he came, or whom he was visiting. But now there were millions of strangers and no one could know who or what each individual was, the result being that we suspected everybody. This was demoralizing—to live in an atmosphere of suspicion and fear, where we were forced

to distrust every face we did not recognize, where we feared the very people to whom we were giving food and shelter.

We in Montigny and the people of most of the little towns of Robert's country, had no defense against the parachutists we knew were everywhere because we could not know where they were, nor who they were. We were asked to watch the German planes which flew over our houses, to see whether parachutes came down from any of them. I watched with a pair of Robert's field glasses, while wondering what I could do if I should see any. Our rural telephone service was suspended between noon and two o'clock every day, and after seven in the evening. It did not operate at all on Sunday afternoons. So, if anything had happened during the night, or during the hours of the day when there was no telephone service, we would have been quite helpless. I discovered, however, that there were revolvers in the house, and guns for hunting. I never had liked hunting, never having been able to stand seeing any kind of animal killed. I had never held a gun of any kind in my hand, not even a cap pistol. Yet I knew then, that if I should see a German descending, parachute on back, over our fields, I would shoot at him, and if I should kill him, I would be glad. This realization, that war could so breed hatred and bitterness it made potential murderers of us all, made me even more wretchedly unhappy than I had been before—since the peace of Montigny and our sense of security had been shattered by the arrival of the evacuees. Nevertheless I knew that, let one German, let twenty or a hundred German soldiers approach my home, with Rose-Hélène in it, and I would try to kill them, each and every one. I put one of the revolvers in a drawer of the table beside my bed. I used to dream at night, of shooting in terror at unseen enemies I could neither hit nor kill.

One day, ten planes flew in formation over the chateau. One flew so low it actually brushed the tops of the trees. I ran out when I heard the roar, thinking the plane was about to crash. I heard the swish of the trees; leaves fluttered around me to the ground as the plane roared over. Poor old Véronique was in the vegetable garden; it passed just over her head and she threw herself to the ground in mortal fear, thinking she was going to be machine-gunned.

I was desperately frightened those early days of May, 1940, and when, on May 16th, the radio announced that Washington was advising all Americans to leave France and return to America the thought suddenly came to me that that meant Rose-Hélène and me. I longed to go while

realizing that I had no right to run away. No, I had to stay but ought I to send Rose-Hélène to some of my friends in New York? How, though, could I carry on without her dear little smiling face as an inspiration and incentive? She was all I had to cheer and encourage me—so I kept her selfishly with me, as I watched and awaited developments.

The villagers looked to me to keep them informed of what was happening in northern France. They knew that I received magazines and air mail letters from America, that I had my radio, and that I subscribed to the Paris edition of the *Herald Tribune* as well as the French papers so they felt that I knew, pretty well, what was going on. I then came to understand the Censor, for the first time. I had always resented his sugarcoating the bitter pills he had to give out, and his keeping some of the worst of the news from the public. But I found myself doing the same thing. The surrender of Holland? Oh, that was expected. After all, we had gained more than we had lost, for now we had Holland's money and supplies and navy at our command. "Oh yes," I assured the villagers as they stood in little groups around me, listening to Madame expound words of wisdom, "I feel more optimistic than I have at any time. The war will probably be quickly over now." They were pathetically eager to believe me. "*Ah oui, Madame; c'est vrai, tout ça.*" My face was the war barometer for our little village. So long as I looked fairly cheerful, they felt things could not be going too badly—so I did not go to the village too often. When I was obliged to go, I donned my village expression with my hat and coat, and I was, for as long as necessary, the optimistic, smiling chatelaine of L'Ormeau.

But deep down inside of me I was just Margaret. Lonely and scared and badly in need of encouragement myself. Rose-Hélène supplied that need.

Robert, during that period, was just south of the Luxembourg border, where the fighting was very heavy. They too, at the front, had parachute trouble. Many parachute troops had come down in his sector, many of them wearing French uniforms. It was discovered, however, that the regimental numbers on their sleeves were those belonging to a regiment which had left for another sector, so the men of Robert's regiment were warned that they were to arrest any French soldier or officer they saw wearing that particular number. Robert said that it was upsetting to have to peer at the numbers on the uniforms of every soldier or officer they met to find out whether that other soldier was friend

or foe. Some of the parachute troops disguised themselves as women, as priests—Robert found one who was dressed as a nun.

In June I took Rose-Hélène to a hospital at Z., to have her tonsils and adenoids out. I could not endure another day the strain of life at L'Ormeau. Believing that a counter-irritant might help, I decided that, since Rose-Hélène's throat had been infected for some time, this was the best time to have her tonsils out. A few days of sane, normal anxiety over a minor operation on my child might serve to help me through a period maddening with worry and fear. So poor little Rose-Hélène was the victim—she who was the only gay, happy person in Montigny! But she got along nicely and returned happily to her peaceful life at home with her toys.

For a few days I had been away from the radio and tried to pretend that things were not as bad as I knew they were.

Life had become almost unendurable at L'Ormeau. During the shattering events of the past weeks I had been alone in that big, isolated chateau except for a two-year-old baby and the peasant servants. I had listened alone to my radio, unable to share with anyone the emotions the news aroused. I had tried to draw my little household around the radio with me, inviting Véronique and the other servants to listen to the news with me at five every afternoon. "But, Madame," Véronique demurred, "thank you very much, but we can't understand the radio." I pointed out that the announcer spoke French, but she said he did so with a Parisian accent and they could not understand.

Another day, I took a copy of *Figaro* to Véronique's daughter Augusta who, with her two children, was living at L'Ormeau while her husband was at the front. She refused it, saying she subscribed to her small home town paper. "I can get from it all the news of the births, deaths and marriages there." I then realized it was useless to try to interest these peasants of Robert's country to what was happening in the northern part of their own France. They could not understand anything they could not see taking place.

During that time I wrote to a friend in New York, "I feel I shall soon be driven to discussing the war with Rose-Hélène."

And to this same friend I wrote, "I admit frankly I am really desperately scared. I would like to gather my baby in my arms and rush to America for safety. But how can I? Robert, and the millions of men at the front with him, can't run away. So I, too, must stay."

VIII

On June 10th, Rose-Hélène and I returned to L'Ormeau from the hospital at Z. That same day, Italy declared war on France. We were so benumbed by that time, we felt no lively reaction to the news. We had come to accept, dully, passively, each new blow that fell. Every time I tuned in to the radio, or heard a German plane passing over L'Ormeau, every time the telephone rang (perhaps to announce a telegram—), I felt a throb of apprehension, but nothing approaching real emotion. We had all reached the point where we were suffering instinctively, like animals; we felt only a primitive elemental pain, not an adult, intelligent grief.

On June 11th, I received a letter from Robert and after that, silence until July first, for, from June 11th to June 30th, the trains did not run in our part of France. In that letter, Robert told me that he was still at his post, a half mile from the German lines, alone with two other men in the woods. They were expecting an attack any hour, any minute, and had put fallen trees and heavy wagons, anything they could find, to impede the advance of the German armies. The telephone lines had been mowed down by the heavy firing, only one remained, which connected them with a radio station a mile away from which Robert's reports were sent back to his regiment, in code. That one line was their only contact with the outside world. Robert sent a message giving instructions where to fire on the Germans whom he could see very well, he wrote, in the fields before them. The reply came back that it was needless to send further instructions, as there were only twenty more shells with which to fire in Robert's heavy artillery regiment. The men were at their guns, ready to fire; Robert and his two men were lying, half-starved, at their posts in the woods. All of them were ready and willing to do their duty, to die doing it, and someone, higher up, had failed to supply them with the ammunition necessary to the carrying out of that duty.

They had had, he said, no food for two days when, suddenly, two men appeared; they had been sent from their regiment, with food which had been left a mile or so back in a car. The five men had to remain in the holes in the woods for a half hour, because of the heavy firing, then they all crawled like snakes, Robert said, in full sight of the Germans who were firing all around them. But, he added, when you are hungry, you will dare anything to get something to eat. They got the

provisions from the car and the three men crawled back to their holes, from one of which Robert was writing me.

"I think," he ended his letter, "of my nice little family at home. My family here are the guns, the bullets (of the enemy), the planes and the bombs, nothing else. What will tomorrow bring? I am really very tired, but not despairing. There still is hope. Have courage, my darling, and pray for me, for us, for France."

Then, for more than a month, I was without news of or from him. Early in July, I received a pathetic little post card, hastily scrawled in pencil. It came from Bar-le-duc. "We are in full retreat, traveling at top speed by night, snatching a few hours' rest during the day. But it is a strategic retreat which fills us with hope. We are more confident than we have ever been—you will see, the tide will soon turn." The date of the post card was June 15th, 1940.

On June 11th, the radio told of the drive toward Paris, and, on June 14th, we learned that Paris, our gay, beloved, beautiful Paris had been occupied by German troops. The inactivity, the passive role of waiting was almost more than I could bear that day. To relieve the tension and strain, I decided to rearrange and catalogue the books in the library, something I had been intending, for a long time, to do. I climbed up and down the stepladder which was needed to reach the highest shelves, dusted and looked through those books which had been locked in the cases for years. Then I put them back, arranging them according to subject and author. Books have been, many times during my life, my refuge, but never had they so provided balm for my troubled spirit as on that day, when Paris fell. The consciousness of a great loss weighed heavily upon my mind and heart, but I was unable to brood as deeply about it when I was handling those beautiful bindings, looking through books of poetry and old classics, thinking that I must read this one, some day, or that. In that fashion, I got through that terrible day alone. The next day, however, I had to have someone to talk to, so Rose-Hélène and I went to Les Chênes. Thus we joined, without knowing we would do so, a procession which has since been described in so many ways by so many people.

It was Sunday, June 16th. It took us two hours to go the twenty miles from L'Ormeau to Les Chênes, and the road was a sight I shall never forget. There was one long procession of vehicles, of every kind and description. Automobiles, with bicycles, mattresses and baby carriages piled on the roofs or tied across the radiators. The interiors of the cars

were packed to the very top and filled with weary and frightened people. There were bicycles on that road, valises tied to the rear, or balanced precariously on the handlebars. There were wagons—some of them horse-drawn, some drawn by oxen—filled with furniture and families. These were usually in convoys, eight or ten wagons together, plodding slowly, one after the other, along the road. There were people on foot, many of them sleeping in ditches along the side of the road, so tired that the noise and confusion of so many thousands of people passing, could not waken them. Old people, babies and children, women; rich people, poor people, all French humanity seemed to be on the road that day. Where were they going? I do not believe they knew. They were out of their minds with fear, with panic (which had been induced largely by Fifth Columnists, stationed at strategic points in the various communities). They had only one idea: To flee, to go as far and as fast as they could, that they might get away from the German troops who were rushing through France at an incredible rate of speed. It was the most terrible sight I had ever seen, in all of my life, and I tried to imagine what it must look like from an aeroplane. I could see only the road we were on, but all the roads leading southwards were like that one; black with people, with vehicles, all moving in one direction.

At Les Chênes, the chateau was filled with friends and relatives who had fled from Paris, from Tours, from Blois. My mother-in-law had been busy, all morning, burying her jewels and the silver, at various places on the estate. I had done the same, at L'Ormeau; we had hidden many pairs of the finer linen sheets, the copper cooking utensils, anything we thought the Germans might want or need. Everyone buried their treasures, those last days before the arrival of the Germans.

There were at least twenty-five people, sitting drearily, hopelessly in the salon when we arrived. No one spoke; what was there to say? They listened to the radio, looked at the maps, and waited. Their faces were dull, almost lifeless, there was not a spark of animation anywhere in the chateau. I thought I would try to instill a bit of life into them by beginning a political discussion. "What," I asked, "do you think about Monsieur Churchill's idea of saving France from disaster?" They all raised their heads and looked at me. What was I talking about? They had heard, had read, of no such idea. How could anyone save France now? France was doomed, and no one, not even M. Churchill, could save her. But—what was the plan? I explained Churchill's proposal that the two empires should unite and continue fighting under a single

government. Every citizen of either country would have a double nationality. There would be no more Englishmen or Frenchmen, there would only be the Franco-British people.

My wish to rouse those benumbed members of the French aristocracy was certainly gratified—to an alarming extent. Eyes which, a few minutes before, had been dull, were now flashing, at me. Everyone sat up straight in their chairs, the men even sprang to their feet. They all looked at me and, as one man, they said, their voices ringing with emotion and sincerity, “Never! Never! We could never, we would never consent to such a plan. We would rather go down in defeat as Frenchmen, than survive as Anglo-Frenchmen.” And, this I say three years later; I am perfectly confident that, if I could ask any one of those same people today whether they feel as they did that June day in 1940 when France was on the brink of disaster, they would say, without an instant’s hesitation, that they do. They have suffered untold hardships, deprivations, humiliations, but they have suffered as Frenchmen and I am convinced that they prefer that to survival, united to any other country.

That Sunday was the only day I left L’Ormeau for even one hour during that week of June 14th to the 21st. I was watching and waiting. On Monday, June 17th, I heard, before my radio, the voice of Marshal Pétain telling his people that he had been forced to ask for an Armistice. On Friday, June 21st, I could stand the strain of suspense no longer. I had to find out what was going on in our vicinity at least. So I drove to St. Emilion, about eight miles away, the nearest town of any size to Montigny. What a contrast the road was to the way it had been the week before! This day, mine was the only car on the road, and I was the only human being out of doors during all that distance. When I arrived at St. Emilion, I found the doors and shutters of all the shops and houses closed; no one was in the street, the town had the appearance of being completely deserted. I went to one store, knocked on the door and, after a long wait, it was opened, a tiny crack. The woman who had opened it exclaimed, “Why, Madam! What are you doing here? Don’t you know the Germans are approaching St. Emilion, that they are no more than fifteen miles from here? Do go home quickly, Madame—” and she closed the door, and locked it. I found another store, however, where they allowed me to buy a few provisions but those people, too, urged me to go home as quickly as I could. During the time I was in that town, mine was the only car I saw; I was the

only person in that region who was not hiding behind closed shutters and locked doors.

Back at L'Ormeau, I waited some more. One could have no idea of what was happening in our part of France. All telephone service had been suspended, one could not write or receive letters, or telegrams, no one went anywhere. It was as though we were living in a ghost world. The only news I got was from my radio, but that could not tell me what was happening in Montigny, or in nearby towns. The Germans were coming so fast, the radio bulletins were often hours and miles behind the German army itself, so we never knew where the enemy actually was.

Sunday, June 23rd, as I came out of the church at eleven o'clock, I heard the villagers saying that the Germans had arrived at St. Emilion. I took Véronique back to L'Ormeau in the car, told her I was going to see whether the rumor was true. I would be back within an hour. I went, once more, to St. Emilion and, once more, there was not a human being to be seen anywhere along the route. It is weird to drive for eight or ten miles and not see anything *move*, anywhere.

When I arrived at St. Emilion, however, there was plenty of life and movement. The entire population were in the streets, and, mingling amongst them, were tall, blond young men in gray-green uniforms. These young men were laughing, they were gay, good-natured; they were offering cigarettes to the French soldiers and civilian men (what few there were), and chocolate to the children. I stopped my car some distance away, and looked at the scene. "Are those—?" The people to whom I had spoken, nodded confirmation. They stood, huddled in a group, watching also. Yes, those were—Germans.

PART THREE

Occupied France

I

THAT very night the Germans issued their first orders. All firearms were to be delivered, with ammunition, the following morning before noon, to the headquarters of each town. That Monday morning I decided to go to see my parents-in-law, having had no news from them for more than a week. So, on the way I stopped at our *Mairie* with a couple of hunting guns and the old revolver. On the road, I passed peasants by the score, taking their guns to town. There were women on bicycles, a shotgun (for killing rabbits) on the handlebars, another tied on behind. There were men on foot, some with horse and wagon, a few in automobiles—everyone hastening, by every means of locomotion, to obey orders. When I arrived at the *Mairie*, I found two Germans, young boys they were, no more than eighteen years old, to receive the guns. Two rosy-cheeked lads, politely accepting three or four hundred guns from nearly as many men and women!

Apparently I was the only person who had ventured forth that first day of the German occupation of our region, with the exception of those who had gone out to deliver their firearms and had then scuttled back to their homes, for I saw no other cars on the route either going to or returning from Les Chênes. There were helmeted German sentinels posted at important crossroads, rifles in hand, but I did not look at them or slacken my pace, and was not challenged. My parents-in-law were astonished to see me—hadn't I been afraid to come alone like that with Germans everywhere? They had wondered how we were at L'Ormeau but had not dared to come to find out. All hope and spirit had left them, they were dazed and crushed. There still was no news from any of their three sons. They showed, that day, that they were glad to see me and to have me stay for lunch with them. I told them I intended

to go the following day to the city of X. to see the American Consul there, and to give him my name and address that he might know there were two American citizens living in that part of the country. My mother-in-law tried to dissuade me from going; she thought I was mad to undertake such a journey alone at such a time.

However, the following morning I did set forth for X., seventy-five miles away, in my little four horse-power car. Old Véronique said good-bye to me with tears in her eyes, convinced that she would never see Madame again. All the village had heard I was going, and turned out to watch me pass, to wave *Bon Voyage* at me. All went well for the first thirty miles. I had met and been passed by many automobiles filled with German officers (I saw no car containing other than Germans); motorcycles, trucks filled with machine guns and ammunition cases; there were guards stationed at various points along the main highway, but no one stopped me, perhaps because I sailed past them so fast they did not have time, or presence of mind to do so. Then I came to a rather large village and found it packed with soldiers, French and German. The French obviously were prisoners who were being taken to a concentration camp somewhere. I tried to go through the town without stopping, but, because of the crowd, I had to go slowly and, suddenly, there appeared directly in front of my little car, a German soldier who held up his hand for me to stop. As I did so, I was besieged on all sides by Nazi soldiers. They seemed to come from everywhere, there were dozens of them. They threw packs and clothes and everything they had been carrying, into my car. Two of them installed themselves comfortably on the front mudguards, others climbed into the car with me, another started to push back the khaki top of the poor little roadster which was actually groaning under so much weight. This all had happened in so short a space of time, and I had been so taken by surprise, I had been quite unable to speak, but the sight of that big German hand a few inches from my face, roused me to action. I hunted frantically for my purse, found it, snatched my American passport and thrust it at the hand. All this without a word being spoken. The German took one look at the passport and shouted, "American, American." The words worked like magic. The soldiers who had been in the car jumped out of it more quickly than they had got in, taking their paraphernalia with them; the two who were perched on the mudguards, slid off, my passport was handed back to me with a bow and a flourish and I was told to go on. I felt more secure the last thirty miles,

after I realized that I had a document of value to protect me, and I arrived at X. without further incident. When I told the story to the American Consul, he was as surprised as I had been at the effect an American passport had had on those German troops. He had not expected or dared to hope, nor had I, that the mere fact of being an American citizen would so impress the Nazis.

The Consul could not tell me very much but it was a comfort to give him my name and address for reference.

X. was completely under German control and everything seemed to be functioning smoothly. There were Nazis in the shops and restaurants, they all appeared to have plenty of money. I went into the most expensive jewelry store of X. and found it filled with soldiers—enlisted men, not officers—buying watches and rings and various expensive pieces of jewelry all of which was paid for in paper marks which, actually, were worthless, but whose nominal value had been set at twenty francs to the mark. There were posters on the walls, in both French and German, explaining the various rules and regulations: Civilians had simply to obey orders and they would not be troubled; German soldiers were to behave correctly toward the French populace; there was to be no raising of prices. Another which interested me very much read:

NOTICE

It has been proven that the telephone and telegraph lines of the German army have been destroyed and that, furthermore, other acts of sabotage have been committed: this in spite of the previous ordinance which decreed the punishment without remission, by pain of death, all acts of this nature.

I have the power, by every means, to assure the security of the German troops and of their installations. Consequently, I have had arrested in the Departments of— and of—, notable people from all classes of the population and have had them brought to X. for hostages.

In case of any recurrence of these acts of sabotage, I shall have

S H O T

without trial or distinction, one or more of these hostages. The French population holds the lives of these men in their hands, and should denounce the unreasonable saboteurs.

X., the 24th of June, 1940

On the return to L'Ormeau, I met a long column of French prisoners marching wearily along. There were at least three thousand of them, with no more than fifteen or twenty Germans to guard them. They needed no guarding, however; one could see that. They were too tired, those French prisoners, too heartsick, to do anything but obey orders. They had been told to march, so they were marching, with the saddest faces I had ever seen—and I had seen many sad faces the past two months. I wondered, in fact, when I would see a smile on an adult face again—a real smile, radiant, joyful, full of hope. The rare smiles one saw those days were brave efforts to hide inward anguish, and they were more painful to see than tears.

The following day, my parents-in-law unexpectedly appeared for tea. They had found, in their anxiety for me, the courage to come the twenty miles to see us. I told them all that had happened the day before, they played with Rose-Hélène, and we had a pleasant hour or so together. They left at about five-thirty, and I turned on the radio to listen to the news—the B.B.C. The front door was open, it being a warm day. Above the noise of the radio, I heard heavy footsteps in the hall. Thinking it was my father-in-law who had come back for something he had forgotten, I started toward the door of the salon when, before my unbelieving eyes, there appeared three German soldiers. They had entered the house without calling to anyone, without ringing the bell—they had just walked in. I stared at them and, in as imperious a manner as I could summon at that moment, asked them what they were doing there. I was able to speak a little German, enough to make myself understood, and could understand the language. One of the soldiers (all of whom were rough and uncouth) replied in French, "*Soldats ici, soldats ici.*" I did not know whether he meant that he wanted to bring German soldiers there, or whether he was asking whether there were any French soldiers hidden at L'Ormeau. In either case, the answer was No, so I got my passport which I always kept near me, it having replaced the revolver for protection, and showed it to the soldiers, telling them that I was an American citizen. They seemed less impressed than the troops on the road had been. The spokesman for the group grunted, handed the passport back to me and said, "Yes, but what about the soldiers?" I was feeling less shaky by that time so I told him, arrogantly, that I did not believe he was an officer, was he? No, well I was sorry but I could talk only to officers; would he please ask some of them to come to see me the following morning—mean-

while, would they themselves kindly go away, and quickly? To my surprise, and, I think, their own, they did go, joining some comrades who were waiting outside, all of them riding away on their bicycles. Véronique and the others had been huddled in the basement kitchen, Rose-Hélène with them, so I went down to relieve their minds, but we all felt rather shaken for a long while after.

Later that evening, Cécile rushed to report to me that there were a number of Germans riding through our park and woods on their bicycles. I dashed out of the house, in full pursuit, with Cécile at my heels for she would not let Madame go alone into the woods to confront those Nazis. I caught up with them, some distance from the chateau. They looked very surprised to see me arrive, panting, with Cécile hovering timidly in the background. I asked them without ceremony what they were doing there. They replied that they were looking for French soldiers. I assured them that there were none in our house nor on our grounds and told them that I wanted them to go away, at once. They said they would—after they had completed their tour of the grounds. They searched everywhere, behind bushes, in the conservatories, and all through the stables, making the refugees show their papers. When they had ridden away, apparently satisfied that we were not trying to cheat them out of a few French prisoners, we locked all the doors and windows. I even had an enormous chest pushed against the front door, as the latter had only a simple lock and could have been opened by only one strong man with just one good hard push of his shoulder—and all of those German shoulders looked strong. Later, I heard that four French soldiers had been found hiding on one of our farms, and had been taken prisoner.

The following morning, before eight o'clock, Cécile came running breathlessly to my room to tell me that there were two German officers downstairs who wished to speak to me. I told her to inform them that Madame had not had her breakfast and was not yet dressed, and to ask them to return in an hour, while trembling inwardly as I wondered how this contumelious message would be received. It succeeded, for the officers went away and, when they returned, their attitude toward me was most polite, one could almost say respectful. I knew, then, what attitude I would adopt with these Nazi conquerors. Their overlords at home in Germany, from Hitler down, had taught them that arrogance, audacity, rudeness could be used with telling effect and should be employed on every possible occasion. I would speak to them in their own

language, in more ways than one, then they would be certain to understand me. These particular officers were intelligent and innately courteous, one felt, and their swagger only skin deep, a Nazi veneer.

Feeling confident that I could manage them, I asked them into the salon, offered them cigarettes, and we sat down to talk the situation over. I asked them what their soldiers had wanted, the day before, and they explained that they wished to install thirty or forty officers in our chateau, and a few soldiers in the stables! Hoping my expression betrayed no sign of the inner panic this suggestion aroused, I told them, regretfully, that I was very sorry but I did not believe that I, as an American, had the right to receive soldiers at my home. "You see," I went on, hastily improvising, "the chateau belongs to me, by the terms of our marriage contract, the farms belong to my husband." "Where," they interjected, "is your husband?" and I replied, truthfully, that I did not know. "So you see," I continued idiotically, "this chateau really is neutral territory and neither you nor I would have the right to violate that American neutrality by having anything of a military nature here." The officers looking unconvinced, I pursued the subject further. "I never have received soldiers at L'Ormeau; furthermore, the stables are filled to capacity with evacuees who have no other home but those, and I am alone in the chateau—a young woman alone with a baby and a few servants. I do not think, do you, that it would be fitting and proper for me to have thirty or forty men here. If there were German women or children here, I would gladly take them"—I knew there were none—"just as I have taken women and children from Belgium and northern France. Women and children have nothing to do with war, have they, they are only the innocent victims of it." We smiled at this little pleasantry. "In any case," I concluded, running out of ideas, "I do wish to preserve my American neutrality—I suppose you *would* like America to remain neutral?" They said they did, but they were so befogged by my rush of words by that time, they hardly knew what they were saying. All my talk had been inane, but it worked, as ridiculous talk often does. The officers agreed that I was perfectly right, and they said they would assign no officers or soldiers to my home. I hoped my eyes did not show the triumph I felt at this, my second victory over the Germans and I said, gravely, that I thought we all were doing the wise thing. They asked me, as they were leaving, whether I thought my country would come into the war and I said I did not believe so. "Anyway, it is too late now, isn't it?" I added, and they agreed that it was

I asked them whether they would please tell their men not to come to L'Ormeau "as soldiers are sometimes less intelligent and tactful than their officers," and we did not want anything unpleasant to happen at L'Ormeau, did we? They agreed that we did not, and promised to take steps to insure that nothing did. I thanked them, they thanked me (for what, I did not know), and away they drove in their fine car (of French make).

I drew a deep sigh of relief when they departed, and was not surprised to find myself trembling violently. I knew that chateaux were being requisitioned, everywhere, by the Germans, and that they had the right to so requisition any and every chateau they wanted, leaving but two rooms for the owners. I had had no idea, when the conversation had first begun, just how I could circumvent this. It had come to me, as an inspiration, that I might succeed in bluffing these Nazi officers into believing the chateau was mine and so was entitled to special privileges. After all, Hitler had bluffed them for many years, perhaps they had become so gullible they could be bluffed even by me. It was a shot in the dark, but it hit the mark and ours was the only chateau in the region which was not requisitioned either in whole or in part.

Having found what an advantage it was to be an American those early days of the German occupation, and finding that I could, with impunity, flaunt my pride at being an American, I told Véronique that I wished I knew where I could buy an American flag to hang outside the chateau. "There is an American flag in one of the store rooms, Madame," she informed me calmly. I stared at her. I had always believed that anything could be found in the chateau, but this—! "An American flag—here? Oh, there can't be, Véronique, you must be mistaken. Perhaps you don't know exactly what the American flag looks like." She asked me to come with her to the attic and there she pointed to a bundle in a dark corner which I had overlooked in my exploration of the chateau and said, quietly, "There, Madame, are all the flags of the Allied nations of the last war. Madame, your grandmother, bought them in November, 1918, to display in celebration of the victory." A lump came into my throat and my eyes grew misty as I undid the paper wrapping and unfurled the flag, holding it high lest it touch the dust on the floor. I stood there for a moment alone, Véronique, understanding, having left me. It would strengthen me and, perhaps, inspire the Germans' respect to see my flag at L'Ormeau, and to remember what it stood for, freedom and independence; to remember that

men had died to defend that flag, the ideals and the way of life for which it stood, and would be willing, if necessary, to do so again. Every morning, then, after that, the Stars and Stripes would be hung out over the front door of the chateau and could be seen flying there until evening, when I would take it in. The Nazi flag flew triumphantly over the *Place* in Montigny, but the American flag flew proudly at L'Ormeau. The French flag appeared for one day over the Town Hall, furled and draped in black, just after the signing of the Armistice, then was taken down and was seen no more.

The second order issued by the Germans to the people of our community was rather puzzling. It was to the effect that the peasants were no longer to tie the feet of the poultry and carry them, heads down. Our farmers came to me in distress and indignation. How, now, were they to get the poultry to market? They had always tied the feet of their ducks, geese and chickens, so had their parents and their grandparents—what else could one do? They couldn't lead the creatures on leashes, they couldn't carry them in their arms—what would Madame suggest that they do? I said that they might make crates for their poultry and fasten the crates on the backs of the bicycles, and this they did. But, being curious to know why such an order had been issued, I stopped my car one day to tell a German officer in the village how interested I had been in that edict and asked him the reason for it. "Well, you know, Madame," he told me gravely, "we Germans cannot bear to see animals suffer."

The next order was a command to keep the streets (both of them) of Montigny, clean. I must confess that I was heartily in accord with this order, but I regretted that it had had to come from the Germans. The French peasants resented that command more than they did any other. The village streets in our Department, they grumbled, had not been cleaned for hundreds of years; streets were never meant to be cleaned; and, besides, it was impossible to keep them clean since the cows passed twice daily through the hamlet on their way to and from the pastures. However, they did scrape and sweep those roads every day of the German occupation of the region.

A few days after the arrival of the Germans, everyone living in the coastal area of our Department had his telephone and his radio removed from his home, by the German soldiers. These were locked up in a room at the *Mairie*, with the promise that each radio and telephone would be returned to the owner "when circumstances permitted." My

radio was not taken, for I insisted upon my right to keep it and was allowed to do so but was told that the set might be taken away at any time, without notice. I never listened to the news from New York or London without glancing uneasily out of the open window, and felt far less worried when I was listening to Berlin—even though it was upon William L. Shirer's words I hung, listening eagerly for the nuances of his cleverly worded dispatches.

I nearly lost my telephone, however. One afternoon, I was resting in my room when I heard Véronique calling me in a tone of voice which always meant "Germans ahoy!" When I ran down to see what the trouble was, I found old Véronique trying to argue, in French, with three burly German soldiers, to whose armpits she nearly came. She explained to me that she had found these men about to cut the telephone wires inside the house, obviously intending to take the telephone away. I glared furiously at the three soldiers, brushed past them to the telephone and called the *Kommandantur*, asking to speak with one of the officers who had come to L'Ormeau that first day. I reminded him of his promise to keep his men off our property and expressed my surprise that he should not have kept his word (I would have been more surprised if he *had* kept it) and said that he must know perfectly well that they had no right to take my telephone. He argued that I could hear the communications between Montigny and the German headquarters elsewhere if I should pick up the receiver at a time when they happened to be talking. I assured him, loftily, that what they had to say to each other was of no interest to me, that I had no wish to listen to anything they said, and I would not touch the telephone unless it rang. But I pointed out that I did need a telephone, isolated as I was, with a small baby who might be in need of a doctor. The officer finally agreed to let me keep the telephone, on the condition that I would not try to listen in on any of their conversations, to which I had already agreed. So we were left in peace—with the telephone. That victory was a rather hollow one, since nearly everyone else had had their instruments taken away, and there was no one I could call. But I liked to see the telephone standing defiantly on our hall table.

After the arrival of the Germans, no more than two hundred automobiles were allowed permits to circulate in our Department, which was a little larger than the state of Delaware. One baker and one butcher in each community were granted permits, and only one doctor. This

last rule created much jealousy and ill feeling among the members of the medical profession, for the one doctor so favored got most of the trade, the others being dependent upon short calls which they could make on their bicycles. I continued, all during June and early July, to drive my car without a permit and no one had challenged my right to do so until one day, about the middle of July, when I had driven to X. with my father-in-law to do some shopping. I had a reserve supply of gasoline hidden away in the old garage at L'Ormeau and my father-in-law had some, too. He was afraid to drive without a permit, so he agreed to supply the gasoline whenever I took him with me to any of the large cities to buy supplies and provisions. This day, I parked the car on one of the side streets of X. and my father-in-law and I agreed to meet there an hour or so later. When I returned to the car it was to find, not my father-in-law, but two German soldiers installed in it, awaiting my return. I glanced over at the other side of the street and saw my father-in-law who was watching to see that no harm came to me, but keeping a safe distance, not wishing to become embroiled in any argument. The soldiers asked me where the permit was which should have been pasted on the windshield of my car, and I told them I had none as I did not need any. They told me to drive the car to the *Kommandantur* where one of the officers could decide that. So off we three drove together, to the consternation of my father-in-law and the little group which stood with him. When we arrived at the *Kommandantur*, I stubbornly refused to talk with the non-commissioned officer to whom the soldiers first took me, and insisted upon seeing one of the superior officers—the Kommandant, for example. I got at least ten refusals from as many soldiers, non-commissioned and junior officers, who said No in every language they could think of, before they capitulated and got me through to the Colonel. In him, Colonel von M., I found an officer of the old school. He treated me with great courtesy, listened patiently to my story, and agreed with me that neutral Americans ought to be exempt from many of the restrictions imposed upon the defeated French. He gave an order for a special permit to be typed, which would be affixed to the windshield of my car, to the effect that I was an American citizen and that, by his order, neither I nor the car was to be interfered with in any way. He also gave me a paper to paste on the front door at L'Ormeau, informing whomever it might concern that the chateau was occupied by an American, the premises were not to be entered without the permission of the owner, and the owner was

not to be annoyed in any way. Anyone violating these orders would have him, Colonel von M., to answer to.

I sailed triumphantly out of the *Kommandantur* with my two precious bits of paper, one of which was pasted immediately on the windshield of my car, and drove back to the point where I had left my father-in-law. I found him nervously pacing the sidewalk, talking with several of his acquaintances and trying to decide, with them, what ought to be done about me if I failed to show up within a reasonable length of time. I told him and the others the story, and he was as proud as I, of my permit, and delighted with the other paper which would protect us at L'Ormeau. The situation there had been getting more and more tense and unpleasant, the German soldiers having entered the chateau at odd and unexpected times during the past weeks. Once, for instance, I had found myself, at seven o'clock in the morning, standing half way down the staircase with a light negligée hastily thrown on over my nightgown, preventing four soldiers from proceeding higher up the stairs. I did succeed in getting them out of the house, but such nerve-racking incidents were becoming all too frequent.

Colonel von M.'s order would put an end to these happenings and ease the tension somewhat at L'Ormeau. So I felt much relieved as I drove home that evening, after having dropped *beau-père* off at Les Chênes.

II

On July 24th, I wrote a friend in Reno:

"Dear Elizabeth: I write you quickly to tell you that I have today received news of Robert! He is alive and well, thank God, but in a prison camp at L—, on the eastern border of France fifteen miles from the Swiss frontier. I can't help wishing that he might have been able to get just those fifteen miles further before he was taken prisoner, with his regiment, on June 18th. These last six weeks have been agonizing ones for, during all that time, I had no idea where Robert was. I thought of him by day, dreamed of him at night, as lying in a hole in the woods, half-starved, perhaps wounded, and abandoned by his regiment, by all except the two men with him who would have been in the same pitiable condition as he. I wondered, of course, whether he had been killed, but, like all wives of soldiers, I never really believed that *my* husband could

or would be killed. The news that he is alive and well comes as a blessed relief—and now I shall try to go to see him. I am going Monday to Paris to see what there is to be done about obtaining his release, and to try to get permission to go to L—— to see, and talk with my husband. At least, I intend to start for Paris—I may get only a few miles and be obliged to turn around and come home. They say that travel on the trains these days is not to be considered for a moment, all kinds of papers being needed before one can even buy a ticket, so I shall try to get through in my little car. At least I can try; I must. One can often accomplish the impossible if one makes a vigorous and determined effort to do so. There was a time, and very lately, when it was best to sit at home and not do anything—that was during the German drive on France. That, of course, was when most of the French population was on the roads, when they, as well as the French army, would have been far better off if the civilians had stayed quietly at home. Now the cue no longer is ‘Wait,’ it is ‘Action,’ although nearly everything is *verboden* these days and one is frustrated in nearly anything one attempts to do. My longing to see my husband is so acute I am sure it will help me to over-ride all obstacles, but I shall not write Robert that I am coming, for his disappointment would be too great if I could not, after all, go. It will be better to arrive quite unexpectedly and surprise him.

“You have asked me to tell you as much as I can of my life here and of the events of the past weeks, you ask me what the French people think of General de Gaulle, what we expect will happen to us and in Europe in the near future. I will try to answer your questions as best I can, but bear in mind, won’t you, that I am necessarily limited in what I can write. . . . This month of July has been the coldest and wettest in the memory of the oldest inhabitant of our Department. That is an apposite remark, although it may not seem so to you. For that means, in terms of food, that the wheat crop is nearly destroyed! It began, on the first day of July, to rain and it has rained every single day ever since. Not a light summer rain, a gentle warm patter, but a heavy downpour, all day and all night. The wind has blown gales and it has been very cold. It has been fantastic. We all have said that one could almost think this rain to be a ‘secret weapon,’ for it does not seem possible that rain could fall naturally as it has fallen this month of July, 1940. June was fine and fair. The sun shone brilliantly every day, the skies were blue and cloudless. That was the month when the farmers hoped for rain, for the potato crop. The French and the Belgian armies

were praying, too, for rain, to impede the advance of the German mechanized units through Belgium and France. Had these July rains come in June, history might have been changed. But they held off long enough to cause the potato crop to be the scantiest in years, and to permit the tanks and everything imaginable on wheels which comprises Hitler's magnificent army, to travel from northern Holland to southern central France. Then came the downpour which has made the 1940 wheat black and ugly. Our farmers have brought sheaves of wheat for me to see; they have ripened and rotted on the stalks and the farmers are unable to cut it. We drive past field after field of wheat which is nearly beyond saving, no matter what the weather may be from now on. It frightens one to look at those fields and to realize what that will mean to us all this winter.

"That is one of the reasons why many French people hope that the Germans are right when they tell us that the war will be over by winter. The average Frenchwoman is not thinking of creeds or ideals at this time, or about the question of right and wrong. She is concerned chiefly for her children, how she is to feed and clothe them, and she is rather tired of the whole business of war. She wants the side to win which will win the more quickly. For England and de Gaulle to win—if they could win—would take years, they think, and they do not want the war to continue for years. They have had enough, and they think it useless for England to go on fighting, for she will get beaten very quickly anyway, and why prolong the agony of losing? These simple French people have lost and suffered so much, they are not asking for a continuance of a war which has brought them bereavement and anguish. Perhaps, they say, Germany won't treat them any worse than did their own government which, they feel, either betrayed them or let them down badly. How else, they ask, could France have lost the war, with the soldiers at the front all doing their best, confident to the last that they could and would win?

"Your last letter to me, by the way, was too frank and caused me a little difficulty. You must not forget, when you write to me now, that you are writing in effect to Germany, and you must not express opinions which the Germans might resent. It is difficult, I know, for you to realize, so far away in Reno, how conditions have changed in France since last you were here. You are living amongst women who are trying to get rid of their husbands. I am living in a world where nearly every woman who has had a husband is either mourning his death, or trying

to find him if he is wounded or a prisoner. That is the dominant note in France today, that of families trying to become reunited. Soldiers have deserted their regiments since the fall of France and escaped from prison camps, to try to rejoin their wives and children. Women have traveled night after night under cover of darkness, often on foot, without papers, risking their lives, to be with husbands who managed to escape.

"I understand you cannot know or realize what life is like here, but you will write only personal news from now on, won't you, Elizabeth, dear?"

"I will write you again, telling you about my trip to Paris and, I hope, to L—. Best love, Margaret."

III

I did not write again. I never did write home the story of my trip to Paris and L— for, from the 27th of July, three days after that letter was written, occupied France was cut off from the outside world by the suspension of the mail service. From that date, no letters could be sent to the United States, nor did we receive any from there. We were able to communicate with unoccupied France, but this only by means of form postcards, of which everyone by now has heard, upon which we put little checks after pertinent sentences supposed to cover any state or condition of affairs. Those irritating cards were in effect for six or eight months, then we were allowed to send ordinary postcards from one zone of France to the other, but letters were not permitted until after the entry of the Germans into the unoccupied zone in November, 1942.

I did go to Paris in my car, arriving there safely and without incident. The first sight of Paris, occupied by German troops, was a sad and unforgettable one. It gave one an almost physical pain to see the swastika flying over the Chamber of Deputies, Napoleon's Tomb, at the top of the Eiffel Tower; to see the Place de la Concorde so taken over by Germans that there were only certain places where the Parisians could walk. It was forbidden to walk in front of what used to be the Guaranty Trust Company, and the Hotel Crillon; in order to get to the American Embassy from the Métro at the Place de la Concorde, one had to make a complete detour, down the rue Royale, along the Faubourg St.

Honoré, and up the rue Boissy d'Anglas. Poor Paris! One felt a sense of shame when one saw her, so under the power and domination of the Nazis. One felt the same embarrassment, I thought, that one would feel if one should see a dear and beautiful friend who, since one last saw her, had been lashed and beaten to her knees by a brute who had dishonored her. She would try to hold herself proudly and hide her inner shame, as Paris did; but you would feel and know the shame was there, you would weep for her, as one wept for Paris.

In the midst of seeing Paris under German rule, and trying not to look, I consulted various people regarding my wish to go to L—, but they all told me the same story. It would be quite impossible to obtain permission to enter the forbidden zone, where the camp was situated, especially in view of the fact that it was difficult to get a permit to go anywhere. The French evacuees and refugees had not yet been allowed to return to their homes, and even people who had important reasons for going to towns within the area of the forbidden zone were refused permission. "If you wait for a permit, you will never go," one of the Vice-Consuls in the American Consulate said significantly to me one day. I had gone to him, in despair, to ask him whether he had any suggestions to offer, and this remark seemed to contain one. I decided, at that moment—as I am sure he meant and expected me to do—to leave as soon as possible for L—, without a permit. "Do you think," I asked the young man, "that a passport is sufficient protection when one is traveling by car these days? The trip back to L'Ormeau is a long one, you know, and one never knows what might happen—" So Mr. A. had two letters typed for me, one in French, one in German, to the effect that I was an American citizen, and the American Consulate would deeply appreciate whatever aid or assistance might be extended to me. To these letters, he affixed impressive red seals and, without actually saying what use I intended to make of them, I thanked Mr. A. and we shook hands good-bye. He smilingly wished me *Bon Voyage* while telling me that he would present an application to the Germans, on my behalf, for a permit to go to L—.

I then went to several shops, looking for small American flags. They were rather scarce, but I succeeded in finding one small one to pin to the lapel of my coat, and a larger one to attach to the windshield of the car. Those two flags, my passport, and the two letters, were my equipment for the journey I meant to take in my four-horse-power car. There was, of course, the paper pasted to the windshield, which helped a lot.

Gasoline? I had four gallons in the tank but the car could go a hundred and forty miles on that, and I was confident that if we could get that far, we surely could get the rest of the way.

I spent the night before I left with an aunt of Robert's, whose place was near Blois. I wanted some member of the family to know of my plan and intention, so they would at least know in which direction I had been headed when last seen. I had had a letter from L'Ormeau saying that Rose-Hélène was perfectly contented, and good, and that Madame was not to come back until she had done all of her errands to her satisfaction. . . .

So, at seven o'clock in the morning, on August first, the little car and I set forth for the Forbidden Zone three hundred miles away, I taking a lunch my aunt had had prepared for me, the car with its meal tucked away inside of it, like a camel, neither of us knowing where or how we could find more food for it, my long-suffering little Rosengart.

We had some difficulty traversing the numerous places where the river Loire crosses that part of France, because most of the bridges were down. We raced back and forth along the river bank trying to find a place to cross, ending usually by finding a pontoon bridge which the Germans had erected in a few hours' time. Some of these were rather shaky, but the car was so light we got across all right and continued on our way, the American flag fluttering gaily from the windshield.

It was at a place called Clamecy that I realized it was time to try to get sustenance for the car. I inquired of some young German officers whom I saw standing on a street corner, whether they could direct me to their *Kommandantur*. One of them offered to go with me to show me the way. The sight of the American flag—of two flags, one on the car, one on me—probably caused him to assume that I was on at least semi-official business, and he was eager to help in any way possible. At the *Kommandantur*, the effect of the letter with its big red seal, and my passport, together with the advice of the German officer that I be given what I needed—"benzine"—brought forth from the clerk who presided over that department, a slip of paper which entitled me to as much benzine as my car would hold. The gasoline had to be bought at a "Tankstalle" on the outskirts of the town, so the young officer remained with me to help me find the way and get the tank filled. It held only eight gallons, seven filled the tank, and the soldier in charge of the gasoline station would not allow me to pay for it, as the slip from the *Kommandantur* did not authorize him to do so. Since that

gasoline had belonged to the French only a short time before, I did not feel that I was accepting anything from the Germans when I drove off with those seven gallons of essence which now had become benzine. The officer asked me where, in America, I came from and when I told him New York, he was most interested and asked me many questions about the city. "I would like very much to go there," he said and when I replied drily, "Yes, I know you would," he laughed and said he didn't mean it *that* way; he had many cousins and uncles in the United States and they all had written so enthusiastically about the country, and the life there, he had wanted, for a long time, to go over and join them. Then the war had come, and he had had to forget his plans and dreams, but when the war was over, he surely would go. "You know," he told me, "we in Germany like your country. Nearly everyone I know has a relative living over there and we have always heard the most glowing reports of the friendliness of the people, of the opportunity for hard work and advancement, of the way of life. Yes, we like America, and we like Americans, in spite of—everything." Much as I was enjoying this rather extraordinary conversation, I had to get on my way, so I dropped the officer off in town, thanking him for his "aid and assistance"—certainly even the American Consulate could have asked no more of him than he had done.

The little car and I sped along the roads, I nibbling at sandwiches as I drove. I feared to stop, my sense of security arising only from the fact that we were moving, and toward L—. We reached Dijon at about four o'clock in the afternoon, where I was once more obliged to look for gasoline. Noticing a group of non-commissioned officers standing in the doorway of a garage, I asked them where the *Kommandantur* was to be found. What, they enquired, did I want there? I showed them my letter and told them I needed benzine and a bit of oil. They all read the letter with great interest, agreeing that it would be poor judgment for me to go to the *Kommandantur*, for there was always a long line of people waiting there, and I would waste much time. They had a better idea, they said, whereupon they summoned a dour-looking soldier who was standing near by, gave him a few orders, told me to follow him. The soldier put on his helmet in a business-like manner, mounted his motorcycle and roared off, I after him. We tore through the streets of Dijon, my poor car straining itself to the very limit of its power to keep within sight of my escort. People turned to look at us as we

passed, such a tiny car *but* with an American flag fluttering importantly from it, a woman at the wheel and alone in the car, both of us being escorted by a grim looking German. I wanted to laugh, it was all so ridiculous, for I had no right to be there at all. *I* knew that but they didn't know it, nor did the Germans. They gave us the gasoline, rather doubtfully, and the motorcycle escort went off, still dour and unsmiling, thoroughly disapproving of the whole business.

We were sailing happily and smoothly along toward five o'clock when I saw before me, a long line of cars, stopped before a barrier. There were a number of German guards posted there, many of them talking to the owners of the cars who obviously were French. This, then, was the entrance to the forbidden zone. There were mattresses and baby carriages piled on the tops of the cars, everything imaginable inside—a familiar sight. These cars had been fleeing southwards a short time before; now they were trying to get back to their homes and the Germans would not let them enter *la zone interdite*. I stopped my car and waited at the end of the line for someone to come to me. This a non-commissioned officer soon did; I showed him my paper, told him that I would like to pass through that barrier, as I was on my way to L—. My letter had worked so well until then, I had no doubt but that it would work in this case—but it did not. The sergeant infinitely regretted not being able to oblige me, but they had strict orders not to let anyone enter that zone without a signed order from a German officer of the rank at least of Captain. Where, I asked him, could such an officer be found? "At the *Kommandantur* in Dijon," was the discouraging reply. I groaned. We had just come from Dijon, we couldn't go all the way back; it was at least an hour's ride so it would be six o'clock before we reached there and the *Kommandantur* would be closed. I should have to spend the night in Dijon and I *had* to get to L— that evening—what was I to do? The sergeant was inclined to be sympathetic. "Where have you come from today?" and when I told him Blois, that morning, he whistled, looking eloquently at my tiny car, and agreed that it would be a pity to have come all that distance for nothing. He suggested that we go back to — the last town through which we had passed, and ask there for a Captain Braun. If I could see him and explain my case to him, perhaps he would give me the permit authorizing him, the sergeant, to open that gate.

"Perhaps!" he added warningly, as he saw with what enthusiasm I started the car, but I laughed and promised to be back in a very short

time and told him I expected to find him there to give the order to raise the barrier for me.

Back we went, then, to the little town, and luck was with me. I found Hauptmann Braun and he allowed me to see him. I showed him the letter and my passport, told him I just had to get to L—— that evening and couldn't I please go? My request was as simple, and as fatuous, as that—what else could I say? There was no cogent argument I could put forth to convince that officer of my necessity for going to L——, for there was no necessity for my going there. I wanted to see my husband whom I had not seen for nearly four months, who had gone through so much since last I had seen him, who now was a prisoner—but that was an aching desire, not a necessity. I had expected, all during that long drive, that, at some point or other, I would be asked why I wanted to go to L——, and I had not been able to decide what answer I would make to that question. Surely the Captain will ask me, I thought desperately—shall I tell him the truth? But—the question was never asked. Why, I have no idea. Nor have I ever understood why that officer gave me his signed order, permitting me to go to L——, but give me the order he did, after only a few minutes' conversation.

I arrived in L—— that night at about nine o'clock. Everyone had to be off the streets by ten o'clock, so I had no time to lose. A garage had to be found for the car, and a hotel for myself, neither of which was easy to do, for the city was filled to overflowing with Germans. I finally did get the little car to bed, giving it a friendly and grateful pat as I left it in the garage, and went off to bed myself, in a dreadful hotel, the only one which could offer me a room for the night. But I didn't care where I slept—wasn't I going to see Robert the next day? My heart beat faster as I thought of him, as I realized that we would be sleeping in the same city that night, that we were so near one another. How surprised he would be, the next day, to see me! I went over and over, in my mind, during that night, which seemed so long, the details of all that would happen, of all that would be said, the next day. My thoughts, combined with the physical and emotional fatigue of that fourteen-hour drive, kept me awake until the early hours of the morning.

I had brought with me the dress that Robert liked best, and the hat which was his favorite. These I put on when I dressed that morning, trembling with excitement. I put on just a *soupeçon* of eye-shadow, and plenty of lipstick, for Robert liked that too. I surveyed myself anxiously

in the glass, hoping I would look more attractive to him than I appeared to myself, with deep shadows of fatigue under my eyes, which showed also the strain under which I had lived the past three months. He would like my nice, slim figure at any rate, I thought, as I looked at my long lines, shown to advantage by the favorite dress. And my nails were a bright red, this for him also (they had created much interest and amusement among the German soldiers I had had to talk with the day before, some of whom had never seen red fingernails before, they told me).

Well, I guessed that was the best I could do—it was nearly nine o'clock, time to go. I ran down the rickety stairs of the hotel, and hurried along the street to Robert's camp which was situated, the clerk in the hotel had told me the night before, on one of the main streets. Yes, there it was—I found it with no difficulty.

I stood before the high iron gates and looked into the courtyard where I could see French soldiers walking slowly and dispiritedly about. That one looks like Robert—! But no, I could not enter the camp without a permit from the *Kommandantur*. This, while disappointing, was no great surprise, so off I went to find the *Kommandantur*—and the *Kommandant*, for I soon saw that no one else could or would give me a permit to see Robert. There were signs posted everywhere in the *Kommandantur* saying that no one would be allowed, under any circumstances, to see any one of the prisoners; people were requested not to seek this permission.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon before I finally reached the *Kommandant*, who was a Colonel Schmidt. He was short and stocky, with piercing blue eyes, a rather florid complexion, stern and severe in manner. He asked me, brusquely, what I wanted. I began with the old routine—showing him the letter and my passport, both of which he read and handed back to me. "Well?" My throat was very dry, my heart pounding so I could scarcely breathe, my hands were trembling so I kept them, tightly clasped, in my lap. "You have seen, Colonel, that I am an American"—this was said to bolster my courage, not to inform him of a fact which he obviously knew—"but my husband is French. He is a prisoner of war—in one of your camps here." He looked as though he were about to speak so I rushed on, "My husband has not been a deserter, that is why he is here. You, Colonel, could not be one. And neither could I." At least I had his interest, I saw then, so I went on, a little more calmly. "I would like to go to America"—this,

of course wasn't true, except in theory—"but I do not feel that I have the right to go unless I get my husband's consent. Women have duties to perform, just as men; we have to be as loyal and faithful, as courageous as the men we love. My duty is to remain near my husband, so long as he wants and needs me, but we have a baby girl, and for her sake, I think we ought to go to the United States." He looked like the kind of man who might have children, so—"Here is her picture, our little Rose-Hélène," and I handed him one of Rose-Hélène's most beguiling and winsome snapshots. I talked for what seemed to me to be an hour, using all my powers of persuasion, advancing every argument I could think of, and I was given strength by the very earnestness, the sacredness of my desire and longing to see Robert.

"Very well," the Colonel finally said, "you shall see your husband, Madame." He rang for his secretary, told him to bring certain papers, which were brought to him. He looked through them, found the one for which he was searching. He ran his finger down a long column of names. I sat, very still, watching him, but I was sure he could hear the pounding of my heart. The finger stopped. "Ah. Captain de Vigny, Robert—" then he hesitated as his eye traversed the page. "Yes, yes," I breathed, "that is my husband's name." The Kommandant looked at me. "Madame," he said slowly, "I regret to have to tell you that your husband was sent, two days ago, to a prison camp in Germany."

IV

I did not cry. How could I, with that German officer's eyes fixed upon me? But neither could I move, nor speak, I was so stunned by the shock of his words, so grievously disappointed, so sick at heart. After a few moments, by sheer effort of will I pulled myself together and inquired faintly, "To Germany? Do you know where in Germany he has been sent?" He replied, glancing sharply at me, that he did not know, but he could and would find out for me that same evening and could let me have the address before I left the next morning. Then he said, "I am going to try to help you because you showed strength, not weakness when I told you what I know was a bitter blow and profound disappointment to you. I can see that, already, you have been asking yourself what you could do next, so I will tell you." He advised me to go to Paris, to the Hotel Majestic on the Avenue Kléber, which hotel

I knew was the Holy of Holies among all the *Kommandanturs* in Paris. I would leave there an application for my husband's release which he, Colonel Schmidt, would fill out that evening. All this was largely due to the fact that I had told him, during our interview, that Robert owned twelve hundred acres of farm land and that our farm manager was also a prisoner of war, which left our farms with no one to direct their exploitation. The Colonel considered that something should be done about this at once. He seemed quite annoyed that Robert had gone so far away from those farms which he, Colonel Schmidt, felt should be looked after. "Why did your husband not tell us that he owned so much land?" he demanded irritably. "We did not send to Germany any farm owners who had six hundred acres or more of land under cultivation. Your husband owns twice that amount—he need not have been sent to Germany at all. If you had arrived here three days sooner, you could have driven him home with you."

Was this true, I wondered, or was it a sadistic desire to make my wretchedness more profound, even, than it already was? I told the Colonel, at any rate, that my husband probably did not mention L'Ormeau because he did not speak German and that, even if he could, it probably would not have occurred to him that his situation would be changed in any way if he told how many acres of farm land he owned. "Besides," I added, "my husband wrote that he would be released in July or August. In nearly every letter he wrote me, he said that August was to be the month of their liberation, perhaps even July. Why did he say that?" "Oh, that," Colonel Schmidt explained cheerfully, "that was because we told the prisoners that they were to be released in July or August. That was to improve their morale, which was rather low when they arrived here." "Where, then, did those thirty thousand prisoners think they were going when they were shipped out of L——?" I asked. The Colonel did not reply.

The next morning before I left for Paris, Colonel Schmidt gave me the number of Robert's *Oflag*, or officers' prison camp, and told me where it was located. Thus I learned where my husband was, a full month before any of my friends and neighbors could obtain information concerning the whereabouts of their loved ones who were imprisoned in Germany. So my trip to L—— did bear some fruit, bitter though it was. It was a comfort to me to know where Robert was, and to know that the region in which he had been interned was not the very worst to which he could have been sent. Being, as it was, so near

the salt water, there would be cooling breezes in summer and the cold would not be too extreme in the winter.

I was escorted by an adjutant to the *Kommandant's* personal garage, where he had given orders to fill my car with gasoline and oil, and to put in the car a five-gallon can of gasoline as well as a quart container of oil, that I might have enough to take me all the way home, via Paris. The Germans had had to bring their own gasoline to L—— for they found none there when they arrived. The citizens of that city had poured into the enormous reserve of wheat which was stored in the cooperative grain silos of L——, all the gasoline they themselves could not use or hide. Thus, when the enemy arrived, they found no gasoline and no wheat. But there was none for the populace of L——, either. The food situation already was acute in early August, 1940, in that city, far worse than in Paris or any other important center.

As I was leaving the garage to begin my drive back toward Paris, the adjutant handed me a sealed envelope which he said the *Kommandant* had asked him to give me. What, I wondered, as I tucked it in my purse, could this be? I waited until I got a little way out of town, then I opened the envelope—and there was a small photograph of the Colonel, a very flattering one, with his Iron Cross prominently displayed on his manly chest. He had scrawled something in German on the back of the picture which I made out with great difficulty: "To a courageous little lady" or words to that effect. I laughed as I sat there alone in the car looking at that photograph. It would seem that the Colonel had received the full impact of my red fingernails and lipstick which I had put on for my poor Robert—and apparently he, too, liked plenty of lipstick and red nails although he certainly had concealed his vulnerability during our two interviews. I was far more grateful for the gasoline and the oil, however, than for the picture.

The drive to Paris was a matter of about six hours. Mine was the only civilian car I saw that day. Automobiles whizzed past me, going to and coming from L——, but they were gray army cars filled with German officers. There were motorcycles, too, mounted by sour-faced soldiers. No one paid any attention to me unless I slowed down, or tried to stop to have a better look about me, which I often wanted to do, for the route was an interesting one. All along that drive, I met mile after mile of French prisoners of war, all going in one direction. Going east. Before them, not many more miles before them, was Germany. Behind them was France, their homes and their families. They marched

slowly, despondently, in the August heat, their faces sullen with despair and resentment. Resentment against whom, I wondered? Against their captors or against those at home responsible for France's defeat? I wanted so much to talk to some of those men, who all looked at me as I passed them, the American flag (which still fluttered from the car) proclaiming that I represented a country which still was free and which perhaps would free them one day. I wished that I had some cigarettes or chocolate to throw to them, or that I could give them a friendly word of encouragement. But I had no opportunity to speak to them, for each time I met one of those long columns of heart-sick weary men, the advance German guards would motion for me to hurry past.

Barracks were being constructed in many of the fields. These were flimsy structures, obviously meant to serve as temporary prisons for as many as possible of the French prisoners who had not yet been sent to Germany. I saw thousands, some already occupied, and this was little more than a month after the signing of the armistice. I thought of those barracks later, when I heard of so many Frenchmen who had escaped from camps in France. Comparatively few ever came back from the German prison camps, but literally thousands made their escape from those temporary quarters in France.

In many of the fields there were charred ruins of aeroplanes, and deep holes made by bombs or by the planes in their plunges to earth. Some of the planes were French, having obviously been burned on the ground; some were German planes which had been brought down in combat or by anti-aircraft fire. The ruined anti-aircraft guns could be seen, still standing at what had been strategic points of the airfields, stripped, now, of their camouflage.

In other fields I saw fragments of gray-green or khaki uniforms, clinging to shrubs or to the lower branches of the stripped trees. The wind had not yet had time to blow away these mute and poignant reminders of what had so recently taken place there.

There were graves, too, lining the roadside. Thousands of fresh graves, marked with wooden sticks fashioned in the form of a cross. Helmets, French and German, dangled from these crosses and often, canteens or personal objects belonging to the late owners, had been placed on the graves.

I passed through Troyes, Chaumont-sur-Rhône, Romilly, Meaux. Many of these towns, most of them, had been severely bombarded from the ground, but not bombed from the air. The houses on the outskirts

of the towns and villages were frequently the only ones in ruins, those in the center of town often being undamaged. Marks of machine-gun bullets could be seen on some of the walls which remained standing at the entrances to the villages. It was plain to see what had happened along here: the German army had advanced along that road, as they advanced along the main highways all over France—they had not had to fight in the fields or the woods. The road here was in perfect condition, and there were only a few overturned army cars and motorcycles in the ditches. It was obvious that these towns had been systematically shelled as the German troops approached them; the town surrendered and the army continued its march after only a slight delay, leaving a few troops to occupy the recently captured town or city. This was my first sight of battlefields of World War number two, of what had so recently been the scene of the defeat of the French armies. I learned afterward that I must have been one of the first civilians on non-official business to have visited that region, for permits were not yet being granted to pass through there, early in August.

I accomplished very little in Paris. It was difficult to get to the Hotel Majestic, as the Avenue Kléber had been closed to all but Germans, or to such people as had official business with them. The note Colonel Schmidt had given me got me past the barrier at the entrance to the Avenue Kléber, but I doubt whether the Colonel himself could have got me into the Hotel Majestic that day. There were at least five hundred people waiting in long lines before the hotel, each of them having a petition to present to some German official there. It was explained to me that each person in that line had been given a little celluloid disc with a number and a black eagle on it. The person then took his place at the end of the line and waited. The lines moved so slowly, one often had to wait three days before one's number was called. All those people would come each morning a little before nine o'clock, those who already had numbers arranging themselves numerically in line, and settle down to another long wait. They would keep their original number until it had been called, when it was returned to the guard. Some of these people would bring sandwiches and reading material, and folding camp stools, living their daily lives in those lines until they were able to see the official they had come to see. There was a convenient café near by whose beer counter and rest room did a rushing business. I was anxious to get back to L'Ormeau and Rose-Hélène, so I left Colonel Schmidt's letter and application for Robert's release with

a receptionist, asking him to see that it reached the proper authorities, which he agreed to do.

When I got back to Montigny, I found the Germans still occupying the village, but L'Ormeau was calm and peaceful. The orders of the local *Kommandant*, supplemented by the paper pasted on our front door, had kept the soldiers away. Rose-Hélène, it seemed to me, had grown during the ten days I had been away and, while she had been good during my absence, she was gratifyingly happy to have me back. I was glad of the warm comfort of her in my arms, which were more aching empty than ever before, now that Robert was so far away from us.

One month after I returned from the trip to L—, I received a letter from Mr. A., at the American Consulate in Paris. It read, "Your application to go to L— has been submitted to the Germans, and has just been returned by them to us. We regret to say that it has been refused. Yours, etc."

V

In August, 1940, Rose-Hélène and I settled down to life in occupied France; I being determined to stay at L'Ormeau as long as the Germans remained in that region, and to try in every way possible to effect my husband's release before winter. I did make every effort to secure Robert's liberation; I wrote countless letters, made numberless visits to people I thought might help us, and investigated practically every "tuyau" which might lead to Robert's release. I made one flying trip to Paris to see General Fornel de la Laurencie who then occupied the position de Brinon now has, his official title being "Delegué Général auprès du Chef de l'Armée Allemande en Territoire Occupé." General de la Laurencie was an intimate friend of my parents-in-law, and I took to him a letter from them. He received me, with great courtesy and kindness, although he was a very busy man, and he seemed to think, after he had considered the matter from every angle, that there was reason to hope for Robert's release as a *propriétaire agricole*. He agreed to present, himself, a demand for Robert's liberation and I went back to L'Ormeau, my hopes high. Two or three days later I was stricken when I learned that General de la Laurencie had been asked to resign his post, and had been replaced by de Brinon, who was more to the Germans' liking.

One afternoon, I was playing the piano at L'Ormeau when Cécile came to tell me that two German officers were at the door and would like to speak to me. I told her to show them into the drawing room, and went on playing, for I happened to be playing the *Lorelei* and wanted them to hear me playing that beautiful song. As the two officers entered the room, I rose from the piano and said, "What a pity that you are no longer allowed to play or sing this lovely song." They agreed that it was beautiful and that it had been one of the songs the most loved in old Germany. "But it will come back some day," they said. "In every revolutionary movement, one must begin with extreme measures, the program being modified as time goes on. We too shall do that, in everything." I said that I sincerely hoped so, for there was not so much beauty in the world that we could afford to discard or suppress it, whatever its source, wherever it might be found. These men happened to be music lovers and they obviously had no argument to make with me on this subject.

These officers had been sent, that day, from the *Kommandantur* at X., to investigate L'Ormeau, to find out whether we owned the acreage I had claimed we owned, whether our farm manager actually was a prisoner, and whether my husband was really needed there. This was the result—more than I had expected or dared to hope for—of Colonel Schmidt's application for Robert's release which I had left at the Hotel Majestic. They made a tour of the place and talked with some of the farmers. Before they left, they told me to obtain and send to them a certificate from the Chamber of Agriculture of our region as to our holdings, how much cattle we owned, how much acreage was under cultivation, and so on. They promised that, when they had received this, it would be sent to Paris with their own report which would be a favorable one. I did obtain and send to the *Kommandantur* such a certificate, after which I had nothing to do but wait for results, but my hopes again were high.

Among the many tips which were given me concerning ways to get Robert released was one which had to do with an Alsatian who lived not far from X. He was doing a brisk trade with the French, getting permits of all kinds for them from the Germans, and receiving for this service, huge sums of money. M. Schneider had lived at Briançon for three or four years, had bought a small house upon his arrival there, and had been living very quietly, alone, until the Germans arrived after the fall of France. Then it was learned that he spoke German fluently,

which in itself was not astonishing, since he was admittedly an Alsatian, but he seemed to know many of the German officers, and he had entrée to the inner sanctums of the various *Kommandanturs*. M. Schneider would, for a certain sum (depending upon what service was required) obtain the desired permits, expedite the many formalities which, in the ordinary course of events, would take months, and he had even, it was said, obtained the release of a number of prisoners.

A friend of mine had a Polish maid who had been sent to Tournon in the adjoining Department (only ten miles from her home) because ours, being a coastal Department, was forbidden to foreigners. The maid had been with Nicole for many years, and she was willing to vouch for her, but all her efforts to get the maid back had failed. Then Nicole went to M. Schneider, paid him four thousand francs (\$100.) and, within two weeks, her maid was with her again.

I was advised by everyone to go to this man and see what he could do for Robert. Then we heard that someone had reported M. Schneider's activities to the big *Kommandantur* at Y., and we waited to hear, any day, of the Alsatian's arrest, speculating as to what his punishment would be. After several weeks, however, nothing had happened. He was still living in his home, still on friendly terms with the Germans, so people began going to him as before, and the results were just as satisfactory. He was still going strong when I left a year later; he surely has made a large fortune by this time. The Germans in the highest positions were, without doubt, aware of what he was doing, and one can safely assume that they were sharing M. Schneider's profits. I never went to the man. I just couldn't bring myself to do it, but I have often wondered whether it would have made a difference for Robert and me if I had.

The letters I had been writing to America until July 27 seemed, most of them, to be getting through—at least only one was returned to me. I was naturally rather cautious not to say anything definite against the Germans in these letters, as I could not be sure into whose hands they might fall. Meanings were shaded here and there, there were nuances which I hoped would be understood by my friends in the United States, but which I trusted would escape the notice of the Germans if the letter should happen to be read by them.

One afternoon in late August, I had another visit from the Germans. Two more officers, less cultivated than the others had been, came to L'Ormeau, wanting to talk to me. They began a desultory conversation, during which I tried to divine the object of their visit. They seemed

to be taking my measure as they talked, and looked about the drawing room at the books and photographs. A large framed photograph of Robert stood on one of the tables. "Is that your husband, Madame?" one of the officers asked me, indicating the picture. When I answered, briefly, in the affirmative, he said that he understood that Monsieur the Count was a prisoner of war in Germany. I told him that he understood correctly, while wondering to what this might be a preliminary. Then he appeared to change the topic of conversation. "You seem to have many friends in the United States. Do you write many letters to them?" I replied that, since I was an American and had lived nearly all of my life in the United States, I thought it was quite natural that I should have friends there, and equally natural that I should write to them.

I let the conversation fall there, with a dull thud, and left it for the officers to pick up and continue if and as they wished. They did wish. They said that I had written a letter to someone in New York, a very interesting letter dated July 25th, which letter, most unfortunately, could not be sent to the United States, as mail service was now suspended between occupied France and America. The letter had "happened" to fall into their hands, and they had read it with great interest. They considered that it was very well written and depicted clearly and fairly, conditions in our part of occupied France, the correctness of the behavior of the German troops of occupation, and so on. It was a letter, they said, which might well be published—did I, by any chance, have contacts with any American publishers or magazines? I told them that I had had a few articles published some years before, but my name was not one which would mean very much to American readers.

"Still," they persisted, "you are an American. Your husband is a prisoner of war in Germany, so you could have no particular love for Germany. Your articles would be read as unbiased opinions, as just and accurate observations of life in occupied France as seen through the eyes of an American woman living here. Such articles would undoubtedly be read with greater interest and confidence than would an article bearing the stamp of propaganda or prejudice, isn't that so?" I thought this was entirely possible, I said, but had they not just told me that letters and articles could no longer be sent from France to the United States? Yes, that was true, but perhaps it could be arranged to send mine through the propaganda bureau, one of the most powerful organizations in the German party.

The expression on my face still told them nothing, so they went on, "If your husband should be released, and he were here with you, your mind would be more composed, you would be more free to write than you are now, having so many problems and anxieties, spending so much time and effort to secure your husband's liberation. Is that not so?" I was determined to make them say, in plain words, what I by this time knew they were trying, so delicately, so subtly, to make clear. "You mean that if I should write articles which could be sent to America, my husband would be returned to me?" Yes, they thought that might be arranged. I persisted, relentlessly. "But on what subjects could I write? Would I follow my own inspiration, writing only what I had seen and heard, omitting perhaps my personal reaction to and opinions about it all?" Well, no, not exactly—they hesitated. "Oh, would I be told what to write? The topics would be given to me and I would be told how to handle the theme?" I was putting it very bluntly, they thought, but that was more or less the idea. I ached, I longed to throw them, to kick them, out of my home. Instead, I stood up, and, walking toward the door I said, "I am very sorry, but what you suggest is quite impossible. I cannot pay for my husband's liberty with my own integrity. I shall continue trying to get him released through normal channels." The two officers bowed stiffly. "As you wish, Madame. But we are quite certain that you will never succeed in getting your husband released by your own methods. If, or when you come to realize this, and you wish to reconsider our offer, it will still be open." They departed, and I never saw them again.

I took only half seriously their warning—or was it meant as a threat—that I would not succeed in getting my husband back in my own way, and I continued to follow every idea which might lead to Robert's release. I never gave up hope of his liberation; each spring I would think that he would surely be with us before the summer was over. By autumn, I was confident that he would be home for Christmas. During the winter, it would be the spring toward which I would look with hope and confidence. How many millions of women have done just that, these past few years, how many millions will be doing so until the war is over! There is a limit to what one heart can bear. If you allow yourself to believe that it will be years before you see the person for whom you are longing and yearning constantly, day and night—someone who is alive and longing and yearning for you—you could not find the strength to endure that knowledge. Not sufficiently, at

any rate, to enable you to get through the days a fairly efficient, rational human being. If you are to "Hold On," you must have an incentive to Will your heart and nerve and sinew to do so; you must have a prop upon which to lean when your heart grows faint, when your nerve becomes taut and strained almost to the breaking point, and your sinew loses its strength and power. That incentive is hope. The prop is hope. Hope makes you sure that your beloved will "soon" be coming back to you, and tells you that you will not have to carry on much longer alone. "He" soon will be with you, and he must find you as he left you, in good health and spirits; he must be proud of the way you have carried on, and held on. Hope springs from the heart, however, and not from the mind. So you must listen to your heart which whispers to you to hope, and ignore the cold, cruel logic of your mind which tells you that it is futile to do so. You do listen, daytimes, to your heart, but your mind often gains control during the night. But the waking hours of the night, fortunately, are fewer than those of the day—although they seem longer. Those tortured night hours do pass, and day dawns. With that new day comes renewed hope and strength. The days pass into weeks, the weeks become months and then years. Still one finds one's self clinging to hope. And still holding on.

VI

After two months of the occupation, the French people had become accustomed, but not reconciled, to life under the rule and the eye of the Germans. In the beginning, they had been so agreeably surprised that the Nazis did not murder us all in our beds, that there was no raping and were no atrocities, the first reaction was that these Germans weren't so bad after all. But then it became irksome having to ask the permission of a German for anything and everything, and the French necks began to chafe under the Nazi yoke. People found it annoying to have soldiers billeted in their homes, and the daily life became a series of vexations and irritations. Stories began drifting in, too, of what the Germans were doing to the chateaux which had been abandoned by the owners, in which German officers had established themselves. The stories seemed to be parallel on every point. The wine cellars, stocked with rare vintage wines, had been emptied in very short order. The empty bottles had been thrown at the walls, staining the Toile du Jouy paper or the

tapestries. Holes had been shot in paintings, the eyes in the portraits being the targets, usually; these were often missed, and priceless works of art were ruined beyond repair. The carpets had holes burned in them, the parquet floors were scratched and holes made in them by hob-nailed boots. Nearly every room in the chateaux had been fouled, whether by deliberate intent or merely because the Germans who occupied them were filthy brutes, one could not know. There were bathrooms in most of these chateaux, but the Germans seemed to use every room in the place but that one for sanitary purposes. If the bathrooms were resorted to, it was not to take a bath, for the bathtub was always found in the most revolting condition. A locked door or drawer seemed to present a challenge to the Germans, for doors were found hacked to pieces, or the locks shot out; closets, cupboards and trunks which had been locked had been broken into and rifled with complete and systematic thoroughness. Many of the objects had disappeared, some were strewn about the floor or found in other parts of the chateau. Trunks were shipped home to the German officers' families, packed with blankets, fine linen and silver. Radios were appropriated, bicycles too, although this last was called "requisitioning." That was merely a distinction without a difference; it did not matter what they called their plundering.

All this took place, however, in homes which had been left without protection. Servants alone were not sufficient to protect the property; someone in authority had to be in those chateaux to save them from ruin. If you could endure living in only two rooms, with Germans occupying the rest of your home, you at least had the satisfaction of knowing that, when your "guests" departed, your house would be, more or less, in the condition in which it was when they arrived. The German troops and officers took their meals at the local headquarters, and never mingled with the French families in whose homes they were staying. The orderlies took care of whatever rooms were occupied by the Germans and those rooms were kept locked by them whenever they were out.

I was able to write Robert, fairly regularly, and received letters from him about every ten days. We were not able to say very much, but I did try to tell him that I had gone to L—— to see him, only to miss him by two days. He asked me to send him parcels of food; they were, he said, very hungry. He needed clothes, too, and various supplies. Notices were sent to any person having a relative in a German prison camp,

telling just what articles could and could not be sent to the prisoners.

These objects were *permitted*: underwear, shoes, foodstuffs, local and colonial. Smoking and chewing tobacco, cigars, cigarettes, pipes, chewing gum. Toilet articles (see exceptions). Playing cards, certain books, subject to the decision of the censor, various games.

These objects were *forbidden*: money of any kind, of any country. Civilian clothes, or underwear which could serve, either because of the color or material, as outer garments. Armlets or badges or medical divisions for those who do not belong to such sections of the army. Scissors, razors, pocket knives or knives of any kind, tools, firearms. Ammunition and explosive products. Ink, steel pens, quills, fountain pens and desk pens. Writing paper, post cards, notebooks, copy or tracing paper, maps. Books containing obscene or doubtful material, or containing maps. Foreign newspapers.

Cameras or radios, field glasses, flashlights, cigarette lighters, candles, compasses, magnifying glasses, matches and tinders.

Alcohol and alcoholic beverages.

Solidified alcohol, inflammable products, all heating apparatuses.

Pharmaceutical products of all kinds, tubes of vaseline, ammonia.

Tooth paste, mouth wash, perfume, shoe polish, hair tonics, tooth powder, fruit juices, chemical products, acids.

Telephonic material or detached pieces belonging to same.

Pepper.

No letters or notes of any kind were to be put in the parcels, which were not to exceed, in the beginning, five pounds in weight. Later, this was increased to ten pounds, one of these a month being permitted. Véronique baked cakes, made patés for which the region—and she herself—was famous, and prepared other things she knew Monsieur Robert would like. Augusta's husband as well as Véronique's son, who had been the butler at L'Ormeau, had been taken prisoners also, so we spent much time, we three women, preparing parcels for and writing letters to our loved ones, so far away.

We were allowed to paste snapshots to our letters, so long as they were of people, not places, so long as the background did not seem to be of interest or importance. I took many pictures of Rose-Hélène to send to her Papa, who was delighted to receive them and marveled at the way she was growing. Robert wrote me, asking me to tell him what words she spoke then. Words! She used sentences, long ones, and words which sometimes sent me flying to the dictionary to learn their

meaning. Often I would shamelessly ask my small daughter what a certain word meant, pretending that I wondered whether she knew—and thus, a new French word would be added to my own vocabulary. I bought her her first doll, about that time, which she named Po-paule. She was rather condescendingly maternal toward the doll, really preferring active games, noisy games, preferably with an element of danger. She did love books, reading being the one sedentary occupation she enjoyed. She would read her A.B.C. de Babar, happily, in a corner by herself, or listen to me reading the other Babar books, which she adored. She looked forward to going to bed each night, because that was the time when she got read to—which perhaps may account for the fact that never has she rebelled, even once, at going to bed.

VII

The Germans bought eggs, poultry and butter of the farmers in our region, paying for their purchases with the paper marks which the peasants did not in the least understand. They accepted them because they were obliged to, but without the slightest idea of the monetary value of those crisp, new bits of paper. I typed twelve charts, one for each of our farms, giving the value of the mark down to one franc:

1 mark	20 francs
50 pfennigs	10 francs
25 pfennigs	5 francs
5 pfennigs	1 franc

With that information on paper headed "Chateau de L'Ormeau," the peasants knew exactly what change to give the Germans, how many marks to ask for whatever was being bought, and the Germans knew to whom this particular farm belonged. They could no longer profit by the ignorance of *our* farmers, at any rate. This idea proved to be more successful than I had hoped, for the soldiers eventually stopped patronizing our farms, going where they could make better bargains with less exigent farm owners.

One day, I heard shots coming from the direction of one of our farms. Jumping into the car, I rushed over to see what had happened and found the farmer's wife in tears because some soldiers had come to the farm and, without saying a word to anyone, had shot a calf and a

sheep and had taken them away. "They didn't even say *bonjour*," she sobbed indignantly. I went at once to the *Kommandantur* in Montigny, reported the incident, demanded that the farm be paid the full price of the animals which had been shot, and made, at the same time, a vigorous protest against that method of buying meat. Apologies were made by the officer in charge, and assurances given that complete restitution would be made after the incident had been investigated. This actually was done; the offenders were punished and money sent to the farmer to pay for the sheep and the calf, but, had no protest been made, the farm would have been out two animals and the episode might easily have recurred.

If one stood upon one's rights those early days of the German occupation, one usually did get satisfaction, for the troops and officers had received strict orders to behave "correctly." This was excellent propaganda. The French people did not fail to notice and be impressed by this correct behavior, which infuriated me. They would not see that it was all a part of the plan to get France lined up on Germany's side. Too few of those people in our part of France stood upon their rights, and the Germans ruled with a higher hand than they needed to have done. I did not know whether this was due to fear on the part of the French, or to a general indifference or lassitude. It is true that the French do not have the combative or aggressive spirit of the Americans, but they are possessive, and I never could understand how they could permit those Nazis to encroach upon their personal rights, and make free with their properties and their possessions as they did. Often, when the peasants were sitting quietly before the doors of their houses in the early evening, resting after their labors of the day, German soldiers, happening along, would rudely tell them to go into the house to bed—and those people would go, meekly, silently. It would be only half past six or seven o'clock for them, and still light, but for the Germans it would be eight-thirty or nine, they having advanced the clocks in occupied France two hours when they arrived, that French time would correspond to that of Berlin. Since the cows and chickens and other farm animals knew nothing of war nor of the French defeat, and did not understand that they ought to change the routine of their habits to conform to German rule, the peasants continued to run their farms by the old, sun time. Thus, there was a difference of two hours between their time and that of the Germans living in the same village—and often in the same house!

The officers with whom I talked all found our Department an extraordinary district. "So backward, so undeveloped, so ignorant of its potentialities. Why, think of what Germany would have made of this region, if she had had it. Much still can be made of it." When I suggested that the people might not be any happier, probably not as happy, if their country were exploited to the nth degree of efficiency—that perhaps efficiency was not their aim—they stared at me in surprise. What had happiness to do with that, or with anything? What could be more important than efficiency?

I had a long conversation one day with a group of officers who came to L'Ormeau to get information concerning our refugees. Some of the men went to the stables to question the men and women there, and to examine their identity papers (and, I later learned, to try to get a detailed account of my activities); three or four remained with me. I never talked with any German who failed to ask me whether I thought America would come into the war. These officers had fought in the first World War, and they spoke with great feeling when they told me how the arrival of the American troops in 1917 had affected them. "By 1917," they said, "we were tired, dirty, our boots and uniforms were shabby and of poor quality, the food was bad. That applied, also, to the French and the English soldiers whom we were seeing every day, so we didn't think so much about it. Then, one day, we had our first sight of American troops, so young, so eager, so confident—and so well equipped and clothed. And, they not only had enough to eat, but they had delicacies and luxuries which we had not seen at home or in the army for years. Their very arrival put new strength and courage into the hearts of the Allied soldiers—and broke ours. We had been fighting for three years, we were exhausted in mind, body and spirit, and here were these Americans, full of fight and confidence—and well fed. We could not hold out against that. It was that which defeated us, not military strategy alone. You remember that, when the war ended, the fighting still was on French soil; not even the Americans, with the French and the English, could drive us out of France and push us back into Germany." "Perhaps," I suggested, "if the war had gone on a bit longer—?" "Not even then," said they. "We would have found the strength to defend the soil of our Fatherland where we could not find the spirit to attack these Americans."

They went on to say that they liked the Americans, the French they respected as good soldiers. The English, they agreed, they de-

tested and despised. "Those English," they said, "think they own the earth. It isn't fair; they have all the power. They are away up here" (hand held high over head) "with Russia, Japan and the United States here" (hand held slightly lower) "but Germany—we are away down here" (below the level of the chair). "Yes, I know," I said. "You would like Germany up there" (high over head) "and all the rest of us down here" (touching the floor).

Oh no, not at all. What they wanted was for everyone to be on the same level, for all the great powers to be on a parity. One of these officers owned a hunting estate in Bavaria of many thousands of acres, and was enormously wealthy. I said that I thought the large estates and great fortunes had been done away with by the Nazi regime, but I was assured that I had been misled by the B.B.C. and other British propaganda, that such was not at all the case. Everyone in Germany, they told me, had as much as they had had before, but the working classes had more, the standard of living had risen since Hitler had come into power—although of course it could never reach that of the United States, they conceded. One of the officers came from Hamburg; I asked him whether the R.A.F. had damaged the city very much in its recent bombardments. He said, "Well, yes, a large part of the city has been destroyed, but we are delighted, because it is a section which we intended to demolish and rebuild after the war—now they have saved us the trouble and expense of demolition." That was the only time I ever got any Nazi to admit that any damage had been done in Germany by the R.A.F. bombings.

They would not express an opinion as to when the war would end, and I never found a German who would. One curious fact was that they never mentioned victory in their conversations with me. This could not have been a matter of tact, for Germans are not noted for their diplomacy. It was simply that they all had jobs to do and they were doing that work, day by day, without appearing to look very far into the future. Perhaps they were afraid to.

Early in July, word was passed around in our region that the National Holiday was to be celebrated on Saturday, July 13th that year as a day of protest against the armistice and against the presence of the troops of occupation. No French person was to leave his or her home that day; everyone was to stay indoors except in case of extreme emergency, and farmers would do as much work as they did on Sundays, no more. There were no banks or public offices in our district, so this

plan could be carried out—and was. July 14th has always been a day of celebration and rejoicing in France, of dancing in the streets. July 13th and 14th, 1940, were, in our community, two days of mourning, a passive protest against the Germans. The plan had been announced only through underground channels, so the soldiers did not know the reason for the empty streets and closed shops of our village and those of neighboring towns, on those two days. They, therefore, could not fine us as they always did for acts of sabotage or for manifestations of any kind. Nothing actually was done against the Germans, but it gave the French great satisfaction to feel that they had told the Nazis just what they thought of them, and had not been punished for it.

The city of X. was far less fortunate in this respect. That important center was forever being fined or punished for one thing or another. The cutting of the telegraph and telephone wires had resulted in a fine of one million francs (about forty thousand dollars) for the city; German soldiers frequently disappeared and were never found, dead or alive. Each missing German meant another fine imposed on the city exchequer. Underground movements of all kinds were discovered; shop-keepers were rude with Machiavellian politeness to the Germans who came in to "buy." Or, the would-be purchasers would be told that there was no more of what they were seeking—the article being fished out from under the counter, later, to be given to the first Frenchman who asked for it. Band concerts were given by the Germans in one of the public squares of the city every day; the citizens of that plucky little city did not stop to listen, did not even turn their heads in the direction of the band, seeming unaware of the music which was blaring forth from German trumpets. Orders then were given for pedestrians to stop when music was being played in the streets, and move on only during the pauses between numbers. This resulted in the squares' being quite deserted, except for the musicians themselves, during the hours of the concerts; people made detours, by other streets, to get to their destinations. In spite of all their fines and punishments, the spirit of those people of X. flamed fiercely and I am sure that they will be among the first to rise against their German conquerors when the opportunity presents itself.

Escaping French soldiers, and even English, knew they would find shelter in some home in X., and many hundreds, if not thousands of escaped prisoners found refuge there on their way south, to the unoccupied zone. A number passed through Montigny—and L'Ormeau

—during the months of summer and early fall and I never heard of one who was betrayed. The Germans must have been aware of this, for in August the following decree was posted on the walls of the city of X.:

DECREE

To Prevent Hostile Acts Against the German Armed Forces

Certain English and French soldiers in civilian clothes are staying in the occupied zone with a view to committing acts against the security of the German armed forces. All acts of this kind are infractions of the laws of warfare and will be punished in accordance with these laws. Whosoever shall aid these nefarious intentions by acts or omissions of any kind becomes an accomplice and exposes his fellow citizens to merciless measures of repression. Every resident contributing to the battle against this activity and aiding, thus, the French government in carrying out its engagements resulting from the armistice treaty, shall indeed be worthy of his country.

In accordance with the powers which have been conferred upon me by ———, I ordain, in hereby repealing my decree of July 14, 1940, for the territory placed under my jurisdiction, the following:

Article 1: Whosoever undertakes to give shelter to, or to hide, or to aid in any manner whatsoever, a soldier of the English or the French army, or of another power bearing arms or having borne arms in the present war against Germany, will be liable to the death penalty or to hard labor. This is not applicable to released prisoners of war, or to demobilized soldiers returning to their homes.

Article 2: Whosoever, having knowledge of the place of refuge of any of the persons mentioned in Article 1, fails to communicate immediately with the German authorities, revealing the hiding place of the offenders, shall be liable to the death penalty or to forced labor.

Article 3: Whosoever, having received information from a reliable source, of plans directed against the security of the German armed forces, does not communicate immediately with the German authorities, will be liable to the death penalty or to forced labor.

Article 4: This decree goes into effect from the moment of its posting.

Article 5: Those persons who, until the first of September, 1940, live up to the obligations announced in this decree, shall be exempt from all punishment.

Le Commandant de l'Oberfeldkommandantur
Z

GENERALLEUTNANT

X., the 24th of August, 1940.

M. Schneider was not, of course, the only Quisling in our Department. He was not the only person who had settled there with an ulterior motive. One saw and heard, on all sides, evidence of the infiltration of Germans into that region during the five years preceding the war. Families had quietly arrived, rented houses in some community, and settled down to the life of a French farmer, shopkeeper or factory worker. The wife had mingled with the other wives, had become friendly with them, and these families became accepted members of their town or village. In August, 1939, most of the men disappeared; some, it was explained, had been mobilized (into the French army, the neighbors assumed), some were "away for the holidays." Many were never seen again, some reappeared in 1940—wearing German uniforms. So often I have heard friends say, "But whom do you suppose I saw in Z. today—wearing a German uniform?" Then would come an account of their having seen, in the uniform of a German officer, some young man who had visited one of their friends—a nice young man, supposed to be a Norwegian, who had ridden, played tennis, and had been congenial in every way. My French friends were now horrified to realize that they had been hobnobbing with a German, a Fifth Columnist, and had even entertained him in their homes.

As the summer got hotter, the troops stationed in Montigny took to bathing in the river which flows through our place. They bathed nude, to the shocked indignation of the older members of our community. The local curé thundered from his pulpit at the young people of our village, warning them not to go near the river whilst the Germans were bathing there, threatening the French boys with dire punishments if they ever imitated that sinful way of bathing. The girls had been looking with interested and speculative eye at the blond young men, even before they took to bathing, but had looked upon them as soldiers and enemies. This scolding from the pulpit had a familiar sound, and placed the German troops in the category of young men who were being reproved for an ordinary sin which everyone could understand and be guilty of. I fear that that may have had much to do with the crop of babies which were born in our region the following Spring, babies born out of wedlock, many of them admittedly with German fathers. This problem had already been taken care of with a thoroughness and efficiency typical of the Third Reich. It was made clear to French girls by the occupation authorities that if a French girl should have a baby by a German soldier, she must abide by the rules for such occurrences: If

the baby were a boy, it would be taken from its mother soon after its birth and sent to Germany, there to be brought up as a citizen of the German Reich. If the infant were a girl, its mother would keep it, would be entirely responsible for its care and upbringing, and the father could in no way be held to account for the child or its welfare.

The girls of Montigny and neighboring villages who had affairs with the German soldiers, and those who had babies by them, were the "bad girls" of the villages. They were known to have had affairs with French boys before the arrival of the Germans and, had the Germans not come, these girls probably would have "had" to marry a French boy some day. So there was no particular shock or surprise when they were seen making so free with these blond, virile young men. The sex urge cannot be measured in terms of nationality. When a flighty or over-sexed young girl sees a good-looking, vigorous young male, she does not think of his background or his race, religion or nationality. The older generation in our district never ceased to regard these troops of occupation as enemies, they saw only the hated gray-green uniforms and resented the presence of the Germans in their country. But this animosity was not shared by many of the young peasant girls who saw, not the uniforms, but the blond hair and blue eyes, and engaging grins of the young men who wore them. It was only too easy to persuade the girls to go a-walking in the evening, after the day's work was done. These men looked so gay, as well they might. Weren't they conquerors everywhere? Weren't they the victors, with the spoils coming to them from every side? The Frenchmen those days were sombre, tired, bitter, discouraged, and the giddy young girls were glad to be with someone with whom they could laugh and be silly, and get away from talk and thought of war. The Germans never talked of war with them, the Frenchmen could talk of nothing else, and it was good to get away from the gloomy subject. It was fun to hear a young man trying to explain or ask something in a language he did not speak very well. Just a few useful words comprised his vocabulary, and when he tried to amplify his remarks, he made mistakes which brought forth peals of laughter. The moonlight reflected the gleam in the young man's eager eyes, but was not bright enough to show up the color of his uniform.

Most of the French girls who did allow themselves to be seduced by the Germans were, as I have said, girls of loose morals, and girls who were overdeveloped sexually and underdeveloped mentally. I

cannot think that the supposed immorality of the French had anything to do with the number of babies of German paternity which have been born in France since that summer of 1940. I believe that any young girl of any country, having the same mentality, having been brought up in the same way as those French girls, has behaved, will behave just as the French girls did. Here in America, the idea prevails that French people are inclined to be loose-moraled. This is far from being true. There is no one as strait-laced, prejudiced, narrow-minded, as the provincial French person of middle-class family. The very rich in France may, as in other countries, through sheer boredom, seek new distractions and new thrills wherever they may be found. And the French peasants, through indifference or ignorance, or a lack of education or moral guidance, may live a primitive, an animal kind of life. But this, too, can apply to any country in the world, not only to France. The respectable bourgeois, the *épiciér*, the French of gentle blood, of old aristocratic families, all have moral codes and ethics as strict as, perhaps stricter than, in our own United States. The well brought-up girls of nice French families behaved during the German occupation as such girls do at any time, anywhere. The Germans, officers and men, were completely ignored by these young girls and young women; no coquettish glances were flashed by them in the direction of field-gray uniforms, not even when those uniforms were topped by handsome faces and mischievous eyes.

September came, and the troops of occupation were still with us. There were rumors from time to time of their impending departure, but our three hundred Germans still remained, despite our fervent prayers and hopes that they would leave. A few hundred extra soldiers arrived in our village during September, but they were not additional troops of occupation, they were officers and soldiers of infantry and artillery regiments, who were in Montigny for a few days' rest. They seemed to know where they were going, and they did not look very happy about it as they set forth toward the coast. Some of them had even talked about the task to which they had been assigned, to the villagers in whose homes they had been billeted. "*Demain—au fond—de la mer,*" one of them said, haltingly, in French. "Tomorrow we shall be at the bottom of the ocean." When they said good-bye, they did so as people say good-bye when they are going on a very long journey and want to be wished Godspeed. We had no idea what it was all about, and were even more mystified when many of them were brought back,

weeks later, to occupy hospitals in our region. They were suffering from shock, and from ghastly burns. The agony of those men was terrific, a French doctor told me who treated some of the patients. The usually stoical Germans screamed with pain and begged to be put out of their misery, and the Frenchman's heart was moved to pity by their anguish. The burns were of a curious kind he had never seen before. The Germans never revealed, even in their hysteria, what had happened, where and how they had become so terribly burned.

When, more than a year later, I left France and heard of the rumored invasion of England, which was supposed to have been attempted in September, 1940, my thoughts flashed back to those men who had departed from Montigny in the direction of the sea, and who had returned some weeks later in such pitiable condition, so gruesomely burned. Could the two events be connected?

Toward the end of September, we had a fearful storm. The wind blew a gale, trees were uprooted, roofs were blown off barns and sheds, wires were blown down and great havoc was wrought everywhere. One of our neighbors, Count de Chambéry, was killed by a tree which fell upon him in the grounds of his estate which was very near our own. Count de Chambéry was a widower who had been a lonely and embittered man, completely anti-social since the death of his wife, eight years before. He had five sons, three of whom were away at school; the other two lived a cheerless existence with him. No one had very much affection for Count de Chambéry, but everyone pitied his loneliness and bitterness. The Germans had requisitioned his chateau, leaving but two rooms for the Count and his two sons. The Count detested the Germans, with an intense loathing, and he took no pains to conceal his abomination of them. There were frequent clashes between Count de Chambéry and the occupants of his chateau. The enforced daily contact with the thirty or more German officers who were living in his home was almost intolerable to him. We all felt, therefore, when the poor Count was killed, that it was the best thing which could have happened to him. Life had held nothing for him even in ordinary or normal times; it held still less now, and he would never have recovered from the shock and shame of France's defeat, and the added humiliation of having had to accept the German conquerors in his own home. We breathed a sigh of relief that he had mercifully been released from the bonds which had held him to his unhappy life, and that the release had come by an Act of God and not, as we had often feared

it might come, as the result of one of those violent clashes he had almost daily with the Nazis. They had taken from him his favorite salon where he and his wife had used to sit together. He had considered it a desecration to his wife's memory that that room should be occupied by coarse Germans, but he had tried in vain to induce them to return that one room to him. He had never succeeded in winning this concession from them in life, but he did win it at last, in the only way he ever could have won—by lying there, cold and still in death. His salon was given to him for his lying in state, and the Germans who lived in his chateau kept out of sight as the villagers flocked to pay their last respects to poor Monsieur Jean. The largest of the wreaths sent to the bereaved family came from the German officers living in the chateau, and we were outraged to hear, the day before the funeral, that the curé had been asked by those thirty officers to have chairs placed in the church for them, for the funeral service.

Our curé was horrified at the idea of having those Nazis in his church, but what could he do? He was obliged to comply with the request—or command, for it amounted to that—and fifteen rows of chairs, two by two, were placed down the centre aisle of our little church. During the funeral service, the chairs were occupied by thirty Nazi officers. They sat, solemn and pious, throughout the Catholic service, and when it was ended, they rose, clicked their heels, raised their arms in the Nazi salute over poor Count de Chambéry's body, turned and marched out of the church, leaving us all sitting there, no one of us able to understand the meaning of what had just taken place. They knew too well, those officers, how Count de Chambéry had detested them, they must have known how he would have hated the thought of their attending his funeral. Or, were they so obtuse that they did not know this? Were they blundering, stupid Teutons, or were they diabolical Nazis, subjecting to one last indignity the defenseless body of a man whose soul they could never have conquered?

In November, the fourth finger of my left hand became infected around the base of the nail. My finger became more and more painful and began to swell, until my wedding ring could no longer be seen. I had Véronique telephone the village operator (who was a German) to ask him to call a doctor. I still had my telephone, but the Germans would put through only those calls which they deemed important. I was in bed with a fever of 102° and in great pain and awaited with impatience the arrival of the family doctor. When I heard a car drive

up before our door, and steps on the stairs, I was more than relieved, until my bedroom door opened and I saw Véronique, anxiety and distress written all over her face, and just behind her a *German* doctor, field-gray uniform and all! It was evident that the Germans had decided that if I wanted a doctor, I would have to accept the one they sent me and, since I did want and need a doctor badly, I saw nothing to do but let this one stay. Dr. Kohlenberg was about sixty years old, he was gentle, seemed competent, and was reserved and polite. He told me, after he had examined my finger, that I had a streptococcus infection which probably would not subside for at least three or four weeks and might spread to the other fingers. He told me to soak the finger in very hot, soapy water every hour. When I reminded him that we had no soap, only a gritty, yellow substance which would not lather, he left me some liquid green soap, promising to bring more. He did return the next day, bringing the soap and some bandages, and he came many days thereafter, to treat my thumb and one other finger which became infected—an infection which was exceedingly painful and messy. Dr. Kohlenberg always behaved like a doctor, he was always correct, not in the arrogant way the Nazis were correct, but as is a good physician everywhere. At Christmas, he brought a box for Rose-Hélène of gingerbread and cookies and candies, such as we in France did not have that Christmas; his wife had made and sent them to him from Nuremberg.

One or two days before Christmas, Cécile came to the salon to tell me that there were three German soldiers going into our woods which skirted the park. Dr. Kohlenberg happened to be there at the time, so he went out to see what the soldiers were doing in our woods. He returned to say that they were looking for evergreen trees for Christmas. He had reprimanded them for having gone to get them without first asking my permission, and ordered them to wait until he asked me what I wanted done about it. Wrapping a woolen scarf around my bandaged left hand, and putting on a fur coat, I went out with the doctor to show the soldiers which trees they could take. The spindly trees I offered them were not the ones they would have chosen, but I told them I wanted to save the others for our own Christmases later on. They could not have those lovely little symmetrical pines and spruces for their Tannenbaum—"and no! *Not* that one." Our little victory tree which they had stopped before, with an enquiring look at me! They had to be content with what I let them have, and they took five of them

back to decorate Count de Chambéry's chateau and another large place in the village they had requisitioned. I wondered whether the French prisoners in Germany would have Christmas trees that year, and it was my doubt about that which impelled me to be less generous than I might have been about contributing to the German festivities. I was glad I had done no more than I had when I received a letter from Robert, telling what their Christmas had been. "December 29th: Our Christmas festivities are over. We were allowed to have our midnight mass at seven o'clock in the morning, beautiful services conducted by one of our comrades who has studied to be a priest. Then we decorated our barracks magnificently. Someone had a sheet, which he fastened to the wall; to this we attached the red scarves belonging to some of the colonial soldiers, and blue woollen mufflers some of the men had received from home—and there we had the French flag! Each of us pinned to this, a photograph of our dearest and most loved ones at home, then we stood before what represented all we loved best, and sang the Marseillaise. The inventive spirit of the French is not yet dead, you see, darling. All of us who had received parcels lately, had saved the most succulent things to eat for Christmas day; we put them all together, and shared them with those who would have had nothing but the usual potato soup at eleven o'clock, as their Christmas dinner. Thus passed Christmas, 1940, for us here in Oflag XIX-Y, all of us thinking hopefully of Christmas, 1941, when we shall surely be with our families once again."

The festivities of the Germans in our region were gayer than those in Oflag XIX-Y. They decided to have a banquet on Christmas Eve, and they went to all the chateaux in our district, looking for a drawing room which would be suitable for their party. They found one in the chateau belonging to Julie's parents; the salon was a beautiful room, fully seventy-five feet long and some thirty feet wide. The walls were hung with magnificent Gobelin tapestries, there were fine old Aubusson carpets on the floor, and the furniture was mostly Louis Quinze. The room had formerly been the ballroom, and the Germans found this the very place in which to hold their banquet. They asked Madame de Vernay to have the room prepared for Christmas eve, with tables and seating arrangements for about one hundred soldiers (soldiers, not officers). Monsieur de Vernay was requested to contribute wine and champagne from his wine cellar, but the men said they would bring their own food and beer, obviously feeling that this was pretty

decent of them. They made merry until five in the morning, while the family upstairs tried to sleep, to close their ears to the terrific noise below, and close their minds to the fear that they would find everything in the drawing room ruined in the morning. When the last man had reeled out of the house, the family rushed down to see in what condition the room had been left. Most of the china and glassware had been broken, the glasses having been thrown at the walls after the rousing toasts and the songs and the *Heil Hitlers*. Holes had been burned in the table linen, the parquet floor was in dreadful condition, beer and champagne having been spilled all over it, cigarette butts and matches had been thrown anywhere and everywhere, evidently while they were still burning. Fortunately, the priceless Aubusson carpets had been taken up, for they would have been treated with no more respect than had been the polished floor.

The Vernays did not celebrate Christmas that year, except as a religious holiday. It was not a festive occasion for any of us. We could not go to midnight mass on Christmas eve, as no exception was made to the nine o'clock curfew even for that occasion, so we went to church on Christmas day. Rose-Hélène and I went on to Les Chênes afterward, and spent the day quietly with my family-in-law. I just did not have the heart to talk about Santa Claus that year so we gave the baby a few presents without telling her the significance of the day. I had bought a carriage for her doll, Po-paule, and a little blue telephone which was a great success.

Toward the end of December, Dr. Kohlenberg announced that he was leaving our region. He told me that I must continue with the treatments and dressings for my fingers and should, in fact, have one nail removed, which should be done in a hospital. I thanked him for his treatments of the past month and asked him what I owed him. He did not want to charge me anything, but I told him frankly that I preferred to pay him and that I knew my husband would want me to do so. He said that I could give him whatever I wished, and he would put the money into the soldiers' canteen fund, so I gave him two thousand francs, more than double the amount I would have had to pay a French doctor. I did not relish the idea of contributing to the German canteen fund, but neither did I wish to be under obligation to any German, even to as decent a one as Dr. Kohlenberg. It was quite evident that he was not a Nazi. He did not dare say anything against the regime, but he never said anything in favor of it as the others always

did. When I criticised Hitler and his barbaric method of providing *Lebensraum* for Germans, he did not defend his Führer, he merely remained silent. He was a cultivated, kind, honest man, and I am sure he was as anxious for the war to end as we were, that he might go home to his wife and children and resume his private practice.

At the end of December, not only Dr. Kohlenberg, but all the Germans left our region! People breathed freely once more, they talked to one another in the streets, they called to their friends from their windows and doorways. What blessed release, after having had the enemy living in our village, in most of our homes, for six months! With their departure, L'Ormeau no longer had to be guarded, and I was at liberty to leave there with Rose-Hélène, for a few months in Paris. The chateau was desperately cold, as the seasoned wood which we had stored away had been requisitioned by the French, and we were left with the green wood which had been recently cut and would not burn. I was very lonely, too, as I could not drive my car with my bandaged hand, and the weather was too bad for friends to come and see us on bicycles as they had done in the summer. Since my hand needed daily attention, and that one finger had to be operated upon, Paris seemed to be the place to go. I looked forward to seeing our apartment again, which had been closed for so many months and arranged to take Cécile with us to be our *bonne à tout faire*. My mother-in-law did not approve of this latter idea, for she said that, while the peasants of our region made excellent servants at home, when they were taken to a large city, especially to Paris, it always turned out badly. But Cécile had been with me then for a year and I had become very fond of her, as had Rose-Hélène to whom Cécile was devoted, and I felt that we could not get along without her. She had never been farther away from Montigny than X., and was thrilled at the idea of taking so long a journey, and, above all, of going to Paris.

So, early in January, 1941, we left L'Ormeau after having spent sixteen eventful months there. Rose-Hélène and I kissed old Véronique good-bye, there being a genuine bond of affection between our old housekeeper and us by then; indeed, I thought of her more as a trusted and faithful friend than as a servant, and I felt sad at leaving her and L'Ormeau which was now our home. But, I told her, we would come back in the spring, when it would be warmer, and when Monsieur Robert would surely be with us once more. And so, we set our faces toward Paris that cold January day, Rose-Hélène, Cécile, and I.

VIII

Early in January, 1941, we installed ourselves in our apartment on the Avenue Foch, and settled down to life in Paris under the German occupation.

My friends in Paris at that time were few. Most of the Americans I had known there were now in the unoccupied zone, or had returned to America. Those of our French friends who had country places preferred to remain at them because of the food situation, and to protect their homes. Many of Robert's friends were prisoners in Germany; their wives had gone to stay with their parents in the provinces. One of Robert's cousins had married the daughter of a well known French writer, and I saw Beatrix and Eric often. Then there were two Norwegians, John, who was a journalist for an Oslo paper, and Haakon who was a free-lance writer. The latter had written a book the year before which had had quite a success, had won an important prize in Norway, and had been translated into eight languages. Haakon was now at work on another book; he and John spent much of their time at our apartment. Jimmie Worden also was in Paris, trying to decide what he could do in the war. The fall of France had left him with nothing to do but drive for the American Hospital and the Red Cross, delivering milk to districts and towns around Paris where the babies and children were without milk. But this did not satisfy Jimmie; this was not fighting the Germans. He could not be content to do any kind of relief or civilian work until the war was over and the Nazis beaten to their knees. We all were nervous and excitable those days, but Jimmie was worse than any of us. He fumed and fretted, and champed at the bit, so anxious to get away he was nearly beside himself.

Then there was Monica, an Englishwoman who had got caught in Paris in June, 1940, on her way from England to Monte Carlo to join her sick husband. She had been permitted to leave England on June 9th, five days after Dunkirk and just five days before Paris was occupied! We never understood, Monica least of all, why the English had allowed her to go, nor why the French Consulate in London had granted her a visa at such a time. Could it be possible that they had known no more about the true conditions than she? She went by boat from Newhaven to Dieppe, making one stop at a Jersey isle, then had a frightful time getting from Dieppe to Paris. There she was caught in that maelstrom of frightened people, all of whom were trying to get out of Paris. There

was no way of going on, and no question of getting back to England. She knew no one in Paris, and spoke not one word of French, but she found her way, somehow, to the American Consulate from where she was sent to a hotel owned by an American woman, Mrs. Bacon. Monica had no money with her and was unable to get funds either from her bank at Monte Carlo or from England, but Mrs. Bacon was very kind about giving Monica a room and one meal a day at a very modest rate. I liked Monica, admired her plucky spirit and the way she endured what could not be cured. I took her out for at least one meal each day while I was in Paris, for she had been eating only the one meal she had been getting at the hotel. There was not much left over from the fifty dollars a month allowed her by the American Consulate (for which she signed notes which would be redeemed when she returned to England) after her hotel bill had been paid, so she had not been eating enough to nourish her, but she never once grumbled or complained. I would have taken her back to L'Ormeau with me but ours being a coastal Department she, an Englishwoman, would not have been allowed there. Besides, she was obliged to remain in Paris where she had to sign in the police register of her Arrondissement every day.

In November, I received a letter from Mrs. Bacon, telling me that Monica had been taken to a concentration camp at Besançon, where she was one of the six thousand Englishwomen who were interned there.

Monica was released, after ten weeks* internment, with a spot on her lung which she had acquired at Besançon. By this time, I was in Paris and did what I could for her as regards food and care, and when she grew stronger and was able to leave her hotel room, she used to come nearly every day to have lunch or tea, sometimes both, with Rose-Hélène and me. She was cheerful company, still uncomplaining although her terrible experience had changed, hardened and aged her. She would not talk very much about what she had been through, but to me she did recount the appalling story of what she and the other women had endured. Her hatred of the men who were responsible for this suffering was implacable. She used to say that she did not care how long the war continued, how long she would have to remain in Paris without money, without clothes or proper food, if only the Germans could be vanquished and made to suffer as they had caused helpless women and children at Besançon to suffer.

It was rather awkward, going out on the street with Monica, for she still did not speak French and it was forbidden to speak English in

public places in Paris that spring and summer of 1941. It was for that reason that I did not teach English to Rose-Hélène. She had an insatiable curiosity, was intensely interested in everyone and in all that she saw, and would make vivid comments in a high, clear voice. I thought it more prudent for these remarks to be made in French than in English. I resented the order that English could not be spoken and began carrying with me on the streets and in the subways, an American best-seller, the title of which was printed in large bold letters, carrying the book, title cover out, for everyone to see. It was a childish gesture, but it gave me a childish satisfaction to know that everyone could see that English was the language I read even though I was not allowed to speak it.

Those Métros—! The troops of occupation could ride on them, free, so could the hundreds of thousands of soldiers who came to Paris on leave. They rode, of course, in first class. Those of the French people who had always ridden first class, now went second, letting the Germans ride in solitary splendor in first class. "Solitary" is not quite the word, however, for the Métros were as packed all day long as our subways are during the rush hours. The Germans occasionally were obliged to overflow into second class with us, which neither they nor we enjoyed. I was propelled, with Rose-Hélène in my arms, into a crowded car one day. Some Germans were standing in the car and when they saw me trying to hold onto a strap with one hand and balance a baby girl in the other arm, they turned to a Frenchman who was sitting near-by and told him to give me his seat. This he did, but with a glare for them and one for me. I was thankful to have the seat, but sorry that I owed my thanks to Germans and not to a Frenchman. I thought of that episode later in Lisbon when an incident occurred which convinced me that most of those acts of courtesy, which were always performed with great ostentation, were merely acts of propaganda and not due to an innate thoughtfulness or kindness on the part of the German. One has always read and heard, and even said one's self, "The Germans do love children, that is one thing that can be said for them." On the other hand, those same Germans can machine-gun little children when the occasion arises, and they can take food from a country leaving the children to starve.

It was their sentimentality, I suppose, which impelled them to visit, in droves, the tomb of the Unknown Soldier under the Arc de Triomphe. I used to sit at my window and watch for hours, the never-ending line of gray-green uniforms pour out of the Métro stations at the Etoile and

make straight for the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Busloads of Germans would drive up before the Arch every hour of every day. These would be enormous tourist buses from Germany, or commandeered Paris buses. The procedure was always the same. They would first approach the Tomb, those German soldiers and officers, click their heels, give the Nazi salute, stand at attention for a moment, then wander about, looking at the inscriptions on the Arch, looking at the wreaths on the Tomb, watching the Eternal Flame as it burned brightly over the body of a young man who had been killed by German soldiers in 1914. The first wreath which had been deposited on the Tomb by the Germans, upon their arrival in Paris in June, 1940, had upon its ribbon, in letters of gold, "To the French soldier of 1914-1918—who knew how to fight." There would often be a guide with these German soldiers, most of whom were in Paris on leave. The guide was usually a short, fussy little German in civilian clothes, carrying a briefcase under his arm. He would get his flock off to one side while he lectured to them under the Arch. There often were four or five of these groups at one time. I used to wish that I might be near enough to hear and to understand German well enough to know what he was telling them; it should have been an interesting lecture. One could but wonder where they all came from, those Germans. They would pour out of the ground like ants, all day long, every day, week after week, month after month, in a steady, never-ending stream. It didn't seem possible that there could be so many Germans in the world. After all, they were occupying the Atlantic coast from Norway to Hendaye; they were occupying little towns and villages in how many countries of Europe? They were fighting at the front, they had men at sea, and men in the air—yet there were enough left over to supply Paris with thousands of tourists every day.

The young German girls in their gray uniforms, who were working in the various German offices, would often pass the Tomb on their way to and from work, and they would never fail to raise their right arms stiffly in a Nazi salute as they strode by the Tomb. Sometimes they did not turn their heads or interrupt their conversation as they carried out what must have been orders, for one could plainly see that they were making merely a perfunctory salute with the arm and not a tribute from the heart.

How unattractive they were, those German girls! They must have been selected for Paris duty because of their plainness. They were never

allowed to go out alone, they always were in twos or threes, but the German authorities, whose concern it was to preserve the purity of the German race and protect the virtue of these *Maedchen* in Paris, need not have worried. The Frenchmen shuddered when they looked at those fat, ugly legs; legs which not even the most glamorous nylon could have beautified, but which were encased in gray cotton stockings. They blanched when they saw the shiny German noses, lips innocent of lipstick, sallow complexions free from make-up of any kind. The blonde heads were neat, but the hair was simply arranged, never in a complicated French hair-do. Even the uniforms were designed to conceal whatever alluring curves there might have been, but one always felt that what they concealed was lumpiness and German muscle. My hairdresser, who had a number of German women among her customers, told me that she had often tried to persuade them to have a tinted polish put on their nails, or just a dash of lipstick applied, or a *souçon* of rouge on their cheeks, but even the wives of the diplomats could not wear make-up of any kind. It was definitely and absolutely *verboten*. The result was that the German women always looked like what they were, fat German hausfraus, even though they bought Paris hats and gowns (as they did, in quantities) and had their hair done at the most fashionable coiffeurs on the Champs Elysées and the Faubourg St. Honoré. They tried their best to acquire a Parisian chic, but they never succeeded, except for a few movie stars, or the mistresses of some of the more important Germans in Paris.

There were a great many German women in Paris, some of them with their children. Paris was considered to be safer than Berlin or other cities in Germany (so far as air raids were concerned) and the food restrictions were less severe, they said. One wondered what they could have had to eat, then, in Germany!

English planes did come over Paris from time to time, sometimes on reconnaissance, sometimes to drop tracts, occasionally to bomb various factories in the suburbs of Paris. When they appeared, people would look joyfully up at them, and wave, if there were no Germans in sight to report them. They would watch for the tracts and try to get one before they all were gathered up by the police. I have a little pamphlet the RAF dropped on Paris, and very cleverly done it is. It was exceedingly difficult to find one, as the Germans and the French police kept a sharp look-out for them, but occasionally a tract would fall onto a roof top or some other spot where the police could not immediately lay their hands on it.

It was read with eager interest and passed around among the finder's friends. Sometimes we would see German planes going up to chase the English ones, but we never saw an English plane brought down, for which everyone was thankful. The Germans became rather worried about the possibility of severe air raids over Paris at one time, and they had air raid shelters prepared for their own use. It was forbidden, by the German authorities, for Germans, civilian or military, to use a shelter occupied by French people. They realized that it would be rather dangerous for a German to shut himself underground with a few Frenchmen, although the Nazi propaganda pretended to believe that the Germans were being received with open hearts by the French people.

One was frequently seeing incidents which belied that wishful thinking on the part of the Germans. I was walking down the Champs Elysées one afternoon when I saw, on the opposite side of the Avenue, a motorcycle overturned in the street, and a German soldier lying beside it. He had just met with some kind of accident, apparently, had struck his head on the curb and was lying in the gutter, quite unconscious. The French men and women passed, glanced at the motorcycle and the still figure in the field gray uniform lying beside it—glanced indifferently, and went on their way. Not one person stopped; no man, no woman, made any move toward the unconscious soldier. They may have been afraid, the French people, afraid they might be accused of having been in some way responsible for the accident. Or it may have been a complete lack of pity.

Rose-Hélène loved the parade which took place every day at the stroke of twelve noon. This was a changing of the guard; soldiers who marched down the Champs Elysées were dropped off at various points where guards had been stationed, these latter taking their places in the procession and marching up the Champs Elysées to the Etoile, where they arrived promptly at 1:45. All traffic was closed at the Etoile and on the Champs Elysées beginning at 11:45 every day. Bicycles, automobiles and buses were diverted into side streets, using the rue Tilsitt to circle the Etoile. German soldiers were stationed at the top of each of the twelve avenues which converged at the Etoile, to direct the traffic. It became a daily irritation to me, that parade and the fanfare which accompanied it, and the way the French were herded into side streets just at the noon hour when traffic was heaviest. I used to think, each morning, that I would not look out of the window that day and would

ignore the parade, but I was always drawn to the window in spite of myself, usually by my small daughter who wanted to be held up so she could see the horse, and to watch the cymbals flashing in the sun, or to see the soldiers splashing through the snow, rain or sleet. Precisely at twelve o'clock, we would hear the ruffle of drums, a flute would pipe out a tune, the big drums would go into action and the parade would start, it having formed in the Avenue de Wagram.

The Parisians, for the most part, ignored the whole business. They would walk along the Champs Elysées talking to their companions, if they had any, their faces expressionless if they were alone; they would seldom turn their heads to even look at the parade a few feet away. There were very few onlookers except the Germans themselves who dutifully supplied an audience for their comrades who were putting on the show. I asked a Frenchman one time—a man of about sixty—how the French could remain so indifferent to this spectacle. Did they not resent it, as I did, did they not hate this daily performance? He assured me that they did resent it as much as I did, probably more, since it was taking place in their country, in their Paris. I asked him, how, then, they could show it so little, why did they appear so indifferent to what was such an annoyance to them? "Because we do not wish to give the Germans the added satisfaction of knowing that we are annoyed," Monsieur Coudert replied. "They are always delighted when they irritate us in any way, and when we appear indifferent to them and their activities, they are the ones who are annoyed—and *they* show their annoyance, which delights *us*."

I was never able to control my expression, or to conceal how the sight of Germans in Paris affected me. I stood, one day, watching a German officer bullying an elderly Frenchman who had offended him in some way. The poor old man was cowering, not understanding what he had done, nor a word of the abuse which was being poured upon his head. A French *agent de police* tapped me on the shoulder. "*Faites attention, Madame.*" "Why, what am I doing?" I asked in astonishment. "The way you are looking at that officer," he replied in a low tone of voice, "might get you into trouble."

A few days after that I saw a beautiful demonstration of self-control. A young delivery boy of about sixteen gave the exhibition. It was in the rue Tilsitt, during the noon hour when the street was crowded with traffic which had been diverted from the Etoile to make way for the parade. The lad was on a bicycle to which was attached a small trailer

filled with the articles he was to deliver. He was whistling, pedaling along in the unconcerned, carefree manner of the French, entirely undisturbed by the traffic through which he was skillfully working his way. There was a car behind him, a German car, which had vainly tried to pass the boy several times. At last the German officer, sitting beside his chauffeur, lost his patience. He leaped out of the car, strode after the bicycle, shouting as he did so to the boy to stop. The lad did not at first realize what the shouting was about, looked casually back over his shoulder still whistling, and was surprised to see that the commotion had something to do with him. He put one foot on the ground to stop his bicycle and waited for the officer to come up to him. The officer was not young; he was about fifty-five years old and was covered with medals, obviously someone of importance. Importance, that is, to himself, or to the German army, but of no interest whatsoever to this young boy, and of no importance in his life. However, the man *was* a German, and as such had to be listened to, so the boy sat and listened calmly while the officer poured forth a tirade in fairly good French, regarding traffic rules. The culprit looked perfectly cheerful and composed, not at all embarrassed or frightened or angry. Just a bit bored. The German was, by this time, quite beside himself with rage as he saw that he was getting no reaction whatever from this sixteen-year-old boy. The chauffeur, summoned, jumped quickly from the car, ran to the officer's side, clicked his heels smartly and stood at attention, awaiting orders. We all watched, tense with interest. What awful punishment was this important looking officer going to mete out to the young boy who seemed oblivious to the crowd which had gathered 'round? He gave his full attention to the officer, but without ever replying, even by a *oui* or a *non*. He was still on his bicycle, steadying it with one foot on the pavement, one hand on the handlebars, the other in his pocket. Even when the chauffeur arrived and he realized that something was about to be done about him, he did not change his attitude or his facial expression. The officer snarled a few words to his orderly; the orderly obeyed the command—stooping down, he took the cap off the valve of the rear wheel, and let the air out of that tire! The boy, even then, still sat there, did not look back at what he knew perfectly well was going on. He just waited. The officer by this time was so furious he was nearly apoplectic; he stalked back to the car, motioning for his chauffeur to follow him. Only after they had got into the car and driven away did the boy get off his bicycle. He calmly reached for his pump, blew up the rear

tire, replaced the cap which had been deposited on the sidewalk. He looked at the crowd as he worked, shrugged his shoulders and grinned. "*Que voulez vous?*" "What can you expect of these Boche?" He exchanged a few remarks with the working people who were applauding him; they had a few choice words to say regarding the morals of the mothers of these Boches. Then the boy got on his bicycle and rode serenely off. It was a superb performance.

IX

It was very cold that winter in Paris, especially in our apartment, which was not heated. Only those hotels and apartment houses which had German occupants, or those which had reserves of coal left from the preceding winter were heated that winter of 1940-41, and our building did not number any Germans among its tenants, nor was there coal in its cellar. We, therefore, had to depend upon electric heaters. I had one in the bathroom and two in the drawing room, so we did manage to keep from perishing from the cold, but only just. The drawing room was usually 32° in the early morning, and by evening, after the powerful heater had been going full blast all day, the temperature had climbed as high as 40°. The baby usually wore mittens in the apartment and we often went out for a brisk walk to get warm. I got chilblains in the fingers which were still bandaged, and suffered terribly with the cold in the finger which had had the nail removed. I would look across the street at a fashionable hotel which had been requisitioned by the Germans, see the smoke pouring from the chimneys, and think longingly of the raging fire blazing in the furnaces of that hotel. One way to get warm that winter was to find occasion to go to some office in a building occupied by the Germans. They liked warmth, and their offices were always 70° or more.

We were fortunate that electricity was not rationed that winter, for we lived almost entirely by electricity. Our kitchen range was electric and the water was heated by electricity. That in itself was a great luxury for I had boiling water twenty-four hours of the day. My apartment became a popular rendezvous for those of my friends who had no hot water—and that was nearly all of them. They would arrive each with a small bag containing bath towel, face cloth and soap, lock themselves in the bathroom for at least an hour, and emerge, rosy and smiling

Cécile was rather shocked in the beginning, for men as well as women friends availed themselves of this opportunity to have a hot bath once a week, but she soon realized that these baths were wholly in the interest of hygiene and cleanliness, and not in the pursuit of fun or of fearful orgies. There were rumors all that winter that electricity was to be rationed. There were always rumors about everything, but few of them were well founded or materialized. Fortunately, that one did not, not that year.

The servant problem in Paris became acute because the Germans offered such high wages that all the cooks, chambermaids, waitresses and *bonnes*, flocked to them, deserting the French families for whom they had worked for many years. One of my friends was astounded one day when her faithful Jeanne who had been with her for fifteen years, came to her and announced, in a shamefaced way, that she would have to give Madame notice. At first my friend could not pry out of Jeanne the reason for her leaving after so many years of pleasant service with her. Jeanne finally confessed that she had been offered higher wages somewhere else, and, as she had an invalid mother and a younger sister to support, she felt it her duty to accept that offer. My friend was paying five hundred francs a month, a normal wage in Paris. She wanted to keep Jeanne, so she offered to pay her seven hundred and fifty francs a month. Jeanne shook her head. No, Madame was very kind, she would never forget how kind Madame had been, but Madame would be unable to pay the wages she would receive where she was going. She was to get two thousand francs a month! Then my friend understood. "You aren't going to work for a German, Jeanne, you aren't! You couldn't." Jeanne shrugged her shoulders. One must live; they are willing to pay, these Boches, one may as well profit by it. They take so much away from us, one may as well take advantage of the few things they do offer. So she departed. But she came back every afternoon on her day off to see Madame, and she brought gifts of butter and sugar and chocolate which she said the German Captain had sent to Madame for being so kind as to let him borrow her servant. He was sure that Jeanne would return to Madame when he, the Captain, left Paris. My friend, I am afraid, accepted these gifts. It was very hard not to do so when one was so very hungry. Real hunger gnaws, not only at your vitals, but at your very soul. You become obsessed by the idea, the thought of food; you become voracious, greedy, the question of food dominates your every thought and action. It is a terrible thing and it

does terrible things to people. As Robert wrote from the Front, people will dare anything to get food when they are hungry. I understand now how people have sold their souls for food, have stooped to things they would never have dreamed, in all the years of their decent, honorable lives, of doing, just to get something to eat. Many people trafficked with the Germans to get food or little delicacies. I know one prominent American in Paris who cultivated the Germans with the express purpose of getting food and coal from them. I know a man in the American Consulate who accepted the gifts of food a German, who had requisitioned the adjoining apartment, used to bring to him. America had not yet entered the war, and Americans got hungry, just as the French did.

The only present we ever received from a German in Paris was in Potel and Chabot, the pastry shop and tea room, when I went there one day with Rose-Hélène to buy some pastries. The place was always filled with Germans, it being their favorite tea room, and very near the Hotel Majestic. I had put Rose-Hélène on a chair and told her to sit there and not move, while Mama did her shopping. She sat, looking angelic while I concentrated on my purchases and ration tickets. When I turned to look at her again, I saw her with a big red apple which, I knew, cost forty cents—apiece—in that shop. Two German officers were standing smiling at her. They saw me looking at them and they said to Rose-Hélène, "This is just for you, baby, only for you," wanting me to understand, I suppose, that they were not making *me* a present. Rose-Hélène was so enchanted to have an apple—she adores apples—that I did not have the heart to take it away from her, so, without having said anything, I turned my back on the scene and left Rose-Hélène to cope with it in her own way. This she did, competently, by thanking the Herr Doktors (which is what she called all Germans, remembering Doctor Kohlenberg at L'Ormeau) and by clutching the apple so firmly in her little fists, no one could have got it away from her. One other time, we were in a restaurant (I had frequently to resort to restaurants that winter), and Rose-Hélène looked around the table and said in a disappointed little voice, "*Il n'y a pas de beurre, Maman.*" "No, darling, there isn't any butter here, you can't have any." Her face fell, for she is extremely fond of butter. Two people sitting at the next table overheard the conversation and opened a small bag which was on the divan seat beside them, produced a sizable pat of butter and offered it to the little girl. I knew by their accents that they were Germans, although they had tried to hide the fact by speaking

French between themselves. Rose-Hélène was so delighted to have the butter, I could not deprive her of it, so I accepted it and thanked the people, as did Rose-Hélène. She was a useful little person to have around, she always got more to eat when I took her out than when we stayed at home.

X

It was a constant, daily struggle to find enough to eat, that winter in Paris. Our days were spent in pursuit of food, of clothing for ourselves and our families. Those who had a ten-pound package to fill each month to send to a prisoner in Germany, had that problem added to the others. I have since heard that that winter of 1941 was more difficult as to the food situation than was the following one, because the crops were better the summer of 1941 than they had been that fateful summer of 1940, and there were more men to work the farms and provide for the winter of 1941-42. Certainly those winter months of early 1941 were frightening. People became nearly desperate after having stood for hours in long lines, shivering in the cold, often to find everything had been sold before they could reach the interior of the shop. Cécile would go out in the darkness at seven each morning (which actually was five o'clock, sun time) and would not return until eleven o'clock and after, and then with barely enough to feed my hungry Rose-Hélène, herself and me. Rutabagas—turnips. That was what we ate nearly every day that winter, I could almost say every day. Sometimes the turnips were cut in cubes, sometimes in long strips, occasionally they were mashed or boiled whole. But always they were turnips, always they were boiled. There was no butter to sauté them, no milk or flour to make a cream sauce for them. I have never eaten a turnip since that winter and am dreading the day when one will be offered me. Rose-Hélène used to sniff the steaming dish as Cécile brought it in and say, plaintively, "*Encore des rutabagas, Maman!*"

I went out afternoons, to the four corners of Paris, in quest of food. I would take the Métro to some district I hoped might have some vegetable that was not rutabaga, or hoping to find a can of something other hungry shoppers had overlooked. One day I found a cauliflower. I pounced upon it joyously, fearing it might be snatched out of my hands before I could pay for it (it cost fifty cents) and get out of the

shop. No question of having it wrapped, for there was no paper left for wrapping parcels by that time, and no string. This day I didn't mind that. I carried the cauliflower proudly, like a bridal bouquet. It did look as beautiful to my hungry eyes as my bridal bouquet had looked to my romantic ones. Everyone regarded me enviously as I passed. I was sailing triumphantly up the Avenue de Friedland with my prize when I saw a Frenchman sauntering down the Avenue. He was very well-dressed, carried a cane, and seemed to have his mind on anything but food. When his eyes fell upon my cauliflower, however, his face lit up, as he gazed at it rapturously. He approached me with lifted hat, bowed courteously and said, "*Excusez-moi, Madame, mais est-ce que vous pourriez me dire où vous avez trouvé ce beau choux fleur?*" (Could you tell me where you found this beautiful cauliflower?) I told him where the store was located, adding that he had better hurry, for there had not been many left when I had bought this one. That last was unnecessary, for he had shot off in the direction of the store before I had finished talking, with a *Merci beaucoup, Madame* tossed at me over his shoulder.

It was a very cold day in late January when Cécile returned toward noon, having found absolutely nothing in the markets. Not even rutabagas that day. I had a moment of panic as I looked at Rose-Hélène, playing so happily with her toys. There were a few snowflakes beginning to drift down and a strong wind was blowing. There was nothing to do, however, but take Rose-Hélène out to a restaurant. We went first to Potel and Chabot, it being the nearest. No customers had yet arrived; we had our choice of tables. We sat down at one, laid with a snowy tablecloth, and I looked at the menu which seemed appetizing although there was very little choice. The waitress came to take the order—or so I thought. But it was to ask whether I had reserved that table. When I told her I had not, she said that it would be impossible to serve us, as all the tables had been reserved. I said we could eat very quickly and leave before the people arrived, but she would not allow that. I had to take off the baby's napkin, put on her coat and hat and mittens and leave the restaurant, Rose-Hélène not understanding what kind of new game that was and not enjoying it one bit. She didn't feel like playing, she was hungry and preferred to eat. We trudged through the snow which was becoming a real blizzard, went down the Avenue de Wagram and tried another restaurant. There we could not even get inside the door, there were so many people waiting for

the tables all of which were occupied. The smell of food made Rose-Hélène ravenous. "*Mais, Maman, j'ai si faim*—why don't we stay here?" she protested as I dragged her away from that restaurant. I explained to her that we would eat when we could find a nice place. She wailed that the places we had been to had looked and smelled nice, but followed me resignedly to still another restaurant, and a fourth. There her patience and good nature was rewarded and she had quite a good meal for which Mama paid the equivalent of three dollars. I was so tired I could not eat very much, for I had had a bad fright. When your purse is full of money and you are unable to buy anything with it, that does frighten you. Especially when you have a tiny girl looking at you with hungry, reproachful eyes.

I decided that day that I would have to do something to prevent a recurrence of that day's happenings. I wrote to Véronique and asked her to send me a crate of vegetables—*not* rutabagas—every two weeks, such winter vegetables as were stored at L'Ormeau. I also asked her to send a chicken and some butter and eggs if she could. This she did and it was on those *colis agricoles* that we lived the rest of the winter. It was not permitted to send potatoes, but they were sent all the same, and were never discovered in any of our express parcels. Véronique managed to send me about a pound of butter every two weeks (although this, too, was forbidden) and what a joy it was to have butter once more! I used to take some to friends in the American Consulate occasionally and I was a welcome visitor when I did. To have eggs again was wonderful. I was never able to buy even one egg all the time we were in Paris so those crates were opened with the eager anticipation with which one opens a Christmas package.

One of the most difficult of our food problems was that of meat. It was not only that the allotted rations were small, but one could not get these rations. As for milk, a child of less than six years of age was allowed a little over a pint a day. That amount of milk was supposed to serve the needs of a child under six, and of the entire household for one day. The milk had to be boiled before it was safe to drink, so some of it was lost in that process. What a pity that, in the country of Pasteur, pasteurized milk has always been nearly impossible to obtain! Many households did not give any milk to the child who was responsible for their having it. That pint was used for the whole family, in cooking, in puddings or sauces, so the average French child has had very little, if any, milk to drink the past three or four years. They never did drink

very much, which may account for the average Frenchman's poor teeth, but now they are getting almost none at all. Someone had to go for the milk between five and six o'clock each afternoon, as it could not be bought at any other hour of the day, and there were no longer any milk deliveries. When summer came, you had to get the milk between ten and eleven in the morning, or it would be sour by afternoon. In the intense heat, or when there had been a thunderstorm, the milk was often sour before ten o'clock, and one had lost one's pint of milk for that day.

Fruit one scarcely ever saw. There had been lemons in every fruit store in Paris at one time but they all disappeared overnight. No one understood where, how, or why. Some said the lemons had been sent to Germany, others said they had been bought by the bartenders of the big cafés and hotels. It is true that if one did go to the Ritz bar or to one of the other smart places, there were always lemons to put in the cocktails and long drinks, but there were none on the fruit stands, nor could you find oranges. I did find some of the latter, just once—and in the Gare Montparnasse. I don't know how I happened to be in that railroad station foraging for food, but you went everywhere in the hope that you might find something, and occasionally your perseverance was rewarded. There in a booth which was advertising Morocco and the French colonies, were some lovely oranges. I tried to buy six, but I was allowed only two. I rushed home, sent Cécile by bus to buy two more. I went again the following day, but there were none left, and I never found any more oranges anywhere. Bananas you never saw. Some big apples did appear in some of the more expensive fruit shops, but they cost thirty and forty cents apiece. One would not dare make applesauce of those apples, at that price, or conscientiously do anything with them but gaze at them in the windows as at precious jewels in the windows of the Rue de la Paix. The Germans bought those apples, of course. They bought everything, everything. Nothing was too expensive for them, they had plenty of money. Cécile did find a pear one day and proudly brought it home for Mademoiselle who was very fond of them. She had paid eighty cents for it!

It was forbidden to send foodstuffs through the mail but everyone did. A parcel post package would have "Sample" or "Merchandise" written on it, but one could be fairly certain that if such parcels came from the country, they would contain a chicken or eggs or some other luxury not to be found in Paris. These arrived safely and in good condi-

tion in the winter, but with the coming of hot weather, the postman would almost be in a state of asphyxiation before he delivered the package into your hands. You would know that it was no use opening the parcel, you would find the lovely chicken in the last stages of decomposition, and the eggs ready to hatch. Out of the dozen eggs Véronique tried to send each week, about half were broken or spoiled before they reached me, but there usually were five or six which could be eaten, so Rose-Hélène was able to have that many a week; Cécile and I were reconciled to the fact that we need never expect to eat eggs. But it was a great blow when the poultry had to be thrown into the garbage can. There was a period of about a month when it was forbidden to send any *colis agricoles*, during which time there was nothing to do but eat in restaurants. That was when I decided to send Rose-Hélène to the country to spend a few months with her grandparents.

Another reason why I had to send her away was because of the difficulty of finding a place to take her for her daily outing. Most parts of the Bois were closed to French people. The Parc Monceau—that park where dainty little girls in very short dresses, and nattily dressed little boys had always gone to play—that park was closed now during certain hours of the day for military maneuvers. For a time, I sent Rose-Hélène to the Parc Rothschild, a beautiful garden in which stood the Palais Rothschild where President Paul Doumer of France had been assassinated in 1932. That garden was a peaceful spot, with a high wall protecting it and the small children who played there daily, from the street. It was an ideal place to take children, and my Rose-Hélène in particular, for it was very near our apartment. Then, one day Cécile told me that the entrance gate to the park was closed and locked. I thought it might be because of repairs, or to clean the garden. When, after two or three days, the park still remained closed, I found the caretaker and asked her when the park would be opened again. She told me that it would no longer be available to French people, it had been taken over by the Germans for their convalescent soldiers. I never saw convalescent soldiers or anyone else go into that park, and I remained in Paris for at least five months after it was closed. The Germans did not use it themselves, but they did not allow the French the pleasure of using it, even the little children they professed to love so much.

Rose-Hélène, therefore, would be better off at Les Chênes, in the country where she could run wild, where she would have all she wanted to eat, where she could breathe the pure country air. She had become

very pale, and had frequent illnesses which the doctor attributed to improper feeding, lack of fresh air and sufficient exercise—and tired nerves. Her sleep had so frequently been disturbed by trips to the air raid shelter, and the few bombings Paris had had affected her emotionally as well as physically. My mother-in-law had often asked us to come and stay at Les Chênes with them, L'Ormeau being so lonely. I preferred to stay in Paris to watch the war barometer, to be near the American Consulate, where I could keep my finger on the pulse of the situation and know, in time, when to act. In Montigny or at Les Chênes, one never knew what was going on until it was too late to do anything about it. I hated to part with my baby, but I did not intend that we should be long separated; this was only to be for a short time, until I could see whether it was safe to return to Montigny or whether it was best to leave the occupied zone altogether—and that was something the next few months would surely decide.

So, soon after Rose-Hélène's third birthday, on March 22nd, I put her and Cécile on the train for Soulanges where they would be met by my parents-in-law. The apartment seemed empty without her, but I knew I had no right to keep her in Paris and deprive her of the comforts and advantages of Les Chênes. It made my parents-in-law very happy to have her with them, so I tried to accept her absence as best I could.

Those parcels to Robert, how they did worry me! It was nearly impossible to make up the ten pounds he was allowed each month. It would take the entire month to fill a box, then it would take days to find a box and paper and cord with which to wrap it. I sent Robert half my monthly ration of sugar, so he and I each had a half pound of sugar a month. Later, packages of compressed raisin sugar appeared in the shops and I sent some of that to my husband. This was supposed to contain eighty-five per cent sugar, and to be more healthful than saccharine, but no one was very enthusiastic about it. Many shops in Paris would sell a chocolate bar weighing a half pound to anyone who could prove, by producing a blue label which had to be pasted on a prisoner's package, that the chocolate was being bought for a prisoner of war. Sugar, chocolate, cigarettes, that would go in. Then, I usually had the good fortune to find, by diligent search, other luxuries or delicacies that would please my husband's palate. His mother sent one parcel a month, too, and she often was able to send a sausage, some navy beans, rice and more substantial, nourishing food than I could get

in Paris. I would look longingly at those boxes before I wrapped them, fondling each article I had put in, wanting so very much to keep some for myself to share with Rose-Hélène. Robert would not know the difference if I kept and ate them myself— No, but *I* would know, and I would hastily put all temptation beyond my reach by wrapping and tying the package securely even though it was not to be sent until the following day. Robert did receive every one of the packages I sent him, that was one thing to be thankful for. Not one parcel failed to reach him, intact, so the sacrifice, if such it could be called, was more than justified. It would have been too awful to have sent those lovely things away, only to have them fall into the hands—or the mouth—of some German.

Another thing that worried us in Paris those days was the question of shoes. We were allowed, in 1941, to have two pairs of shoes, no more. Not two pairs a year—you could have, in your possession, no more than two pairs of shoes. You could not ask for a *bon* to buy another pair until your reserve was down to two pairs, with one pair so badly worn it soon would have to be replaced. When this moment came, in your life, you would go to the *Mairie*, fill out an application giving various and sundry details concerning the place and date of your birth, and that of your mother and father, their professions, and your own, your husband's if you had one, and so on, ad infinitum. You told how many pairs of shoes you had at that time, the color and style of each, and in what state of repair they were. Then you left your application and you waited. Naturally you had waited an hour or two in a line to file the application, but you waited for months for anything to come of that. One day, weeks or months later, when you least expected it, an amiable, courteous young man would call at your home and ask to be shown your bedroom and the closets where you kept your clothes and shoes. You had no time to dash before him and hide any surplus pairs you might have forgotten to mention in the application. If there were such shoes, you might as well forget, for a very long time, the idea of getting any more. If you did have only one pair standing forlorn in your closet, and a dilapidated pair on your feet, you would be given a *bon* with which you could buy yourself another pair of shoes. You treasured this precious *bon* for several days to croon over, and to show triumphantly to your less fortunate friends. Then you would make the rounds of the shoe shops to find a pair that fit and pleased you. You had already waited, often as long as eight months, for this *bon*, and you

knew you wouldn't get another before at least a year, so you did not intend to spend it recklessly or foolishly. At that time, leather shoes still could be obtained with a *bon*, but when I left France at the end of 1942, there were very few leather shoes to be found anywhere. Nearly everyone was wearing wooden shoes by that time, which were cleverly made, with articulated soles. There were springs of some kind hidden in the two-inch thick soles, which made the shoes remarkably comfortable and easy to wear. The chief drawback was that they were noisy; no way had yet been found to make them less so. The clatter of those shoes could be heard a block away, and the noise they made coming down uncarpeted stairs was almost deafening.

I applied for a pair of black shoes early in February. No one ever came to investigate my shoe situation, and I left Paris five months after I had filed the application, still with no black shoes.

No one was ever glad to see those inspectors, however courteous they were, for they were authorized to search the entire house or apartment if they chose. They often discovered bits of food tucked away in refrigerators or cupboards which proclaimed that one was not living within one's rations. They were empowered to take away with them, any butter, eggs, sugar or other food they saw which obviously had been obtained without benefit of ration card, so many people gave up shoes in order to protect their refrigerators and pantry shelves. Agents could search them at any time, but I never heard of their doing so, except when they were already in the house to inspect the matter of shoes.

XI

One Sunday afternoon in February, John and Haakon were having tea with me at the apartment. Cécile was out with the baby. The doorbell rang, I answered it and there stood a German officer whom I did not at first recognize. Then, as he stepped forward into the light, I saw that it was Colonel Schmidt from L——! He had written me occasionally to inquire about my husband, I had replied that his application had produced results, but negative ones. I had told him that Rose-Hélène and I were in Paris, but had never dreamed of his coming to pay us a visit. I could not imagine what he was doing there, why he had come to see me, but I asked him to come in, and told him I had two Norwegian guests for tea. He obviously did not care about seeing them,

but could not very well go away having got that far, so I took him into the drawing room and presented my two friends to him. There we were, a Nazi officer, two Norwegians and an American having tea together. John and Haakon, being journalists, were glad of an opportunity to talk to a German officer, but Colonel Schmidt was not too pleased at having to answer or dodge their questions. I gave the men some port wine to drink and listened to them as they talked. Colonel Schmidt had been sent from L—— to Paris, he told us, as he had received orders to prepare for a long journey. He had to order supplies and rations for at least two weeks' travel so, while he was in Paris, and before leaving on this journey, he thought he would come to inquire about my news concerning my husband, and to say good-bye. I told him I was still working and hoping for my husband's liberation, but sometimes I got discouraged and felt that only the end of the war could bring that about. Did he think there was any chance of its coming to an end that year? He shook his head—decidedly not. I remarked that I thought they had hoped it might. "No," said he, "not with those English. You know how they are; they are like bulldogs, they hold on and on, like this," he clenched his fist. "They never will admit that they are beaten, they never know when they are beaten." "But your air raids," I persisted, hoping to draw him out, "they were pretty successful last fall. I don't know how many planes you have" (he did not volunteer the information) "but if you should send them all over in one day, wouldn't the whole thing be finished?" "Not even then," he said. "Air raids are only to break the spirit of a country, the infantry and artillery must invade and conquer a country after the ground has been softened by the planes. The spirit of England can never be broken, and an invasion is not practical." He paused, then added reflectively, "No, there is only one way this war can end." We looked at him, our faces question marks. "By gas," he said succinctly. His expression as he said this was frightening. It would be a year of much fighting and bloodshed, of frightful losses on all sides, he said, but it would not be the end of the war. Well, he was right. Two months later, Yugoslavia was attacked by Germany, there was heavy fighting and 1941 did not mark the end of the war. I could pretty well guess where Colonel Schmidt had been sent when he left Paris on a "long journey." I never heard of or from him again, after that February day in 1941.

The curfew at that time was at eleven o'clock except when Paris was being punished for something, when it was advanced to nine. If

you were caught out of doors after the curfew, and before five o'clock in the morning, without a special permit, you were arrested by the German patrol and taken to a police station where you were obliged to polish boots the Germans would thoughtfully have left for that purpose. I was caught one night at about five minutes past eleven, as I was putting my hand on the doorknob of our apartment house. "*Halte!*" I halted, for everyone knew what happened if you didn't. The German patrol came up to me, pointed to his wrist watch—five minutes past the hour. I said yes, but it was only five little minutes, and this was where I lived. But there were a number of boots which needed cleaning and polishing that night, apparently, for off I was taken to the police station. Others joined me, later. Some were revelers who had lost all interest in the time, or in the war, for that matter. There was one girl whose profession necessitated her being on the streets at that hour, but she had forgotten to bring her permit out with her, so she had to count that night lost and polish boots with the rest of us. I did not do a very good job of polishing, a number of scratches got on the boots, somehow, but I pointed out, when my work was criticized, that I was rather new at that job and would perhaps do better the next time. I was allowed to leave, as were those of the others who could be wakened, at five o'clock, and there never was a next time. I was careful to be indoors before the curfew after that.

One night I spent at the *Boeuf sur le Toit*, the night club at the George V. Hotel. I do not care very much for that sort of thing, especially without Robert, but I was curious to see how the other half was living in occupied Paris. I went with Haakon and Jimmie Worden and John. Jimmie was leaving Paris early the next morning for Lisbon. It was not what one could call a gay evening. People began drifting away about ten-thirty, those who intended to go home, the rest of us dug in for the night. Edith Piaf sang that evening, and Betty Spell sang her famous song about the village where everyone was mad, as well as other favorite and slightly ribald songs. Some people danced, but about one o'clock, everyone began to look sleepy or frankly bored, and nearly everyone would have been glad to be able to go home. By two-thirty, the musicians had gone to sleep, as had nearly everyone else, and we were trying to play word games and intelligence tests when Jimmie suddenly rose to the full height of his six feet two inches and announced that he was going. We protested that he couldn't do that, it would be silly for him to be arrested a few hours before leaving Paris, but he

said good night and good-bye to us and walked out into the night. I was worried about him until a note was brought to the apartment the next morning—or later the same morning—saying that he had got back to his hotel all right, that no one was to come to the station to see him off, that he was sending me some books and Rose-Hélène a nice cake of pre-war soap. We, however, had to spend the night in that wretched *boîte de nuit*, and it was very dull. Haakon and John both went to sleep, stretched out on the divans that lined the walls. I was the only one in the room who was not asleep, and I regretted terribly that I had not brought a book or my knitting. Toward five o'clock I woke my escorts and asked them if they would mind taking me home. We staggered sleepily back to my apartment in the darkness (the 3 A.M. Paris time darkness) and the cold. John and Haakon were glad to dive down into the Métro at the Etoile and go home to bed, and none of us felt that the game was worth the candle. I never did that again, either, although I did get caught in a friend's apartment another night, having failed to notice the time before it was too late to attempt to get home. And once, John and Haakon were caught in my apartment. One of them slept in the living room, on the sofa, and the other on a bed in the room with Rose-Hélène, who was surprised and quite indignant when she woke the next morning, to find a man asleep in her bedroom. It was Monsieur John, whom she knew very well and had always liked until then, but she took a dislike to him from that moment. Her three-year-old moral code had been offended at having had to share her bedroom with this man who did not belong in our apartment, and she never forgave John his transgression, although we all tried to talk her out of her prejudice.

It was a common occurrence for shouts of "*Halte!*" to ring out in the night, followed by a shot. I would run to the window and look out, but never saw anything. No one actually knew what went on in the streets of Paris between the hours of 11 P.M. and 5 A.M. One would hear the rumble of trucks, but these were closed vans so one could not see what was in them, but it was easy to imagine, with the daily disappearance of food supplies and other commodities from Paris. On one occasion, I heard a woman screaming, then a man's harsh voice telling her to be quiet. She screamed louder—"*Pas ça, pas ça.*" Her screams became muffled but more desperate. I looked out of the window and, in the dim light, saw a young girl sitting on a bench across the street. She was sobbing, her shoulders firmly held by a German officer. She

did not appear to be a girl of the streets, nor was this an occasion of arrest for being out after hours. She seemed to know the officer, they appeared to have been together, now he was insisting that she do something the girl did not want to do. She was in such distress and so frightened, I wanted to call the police, but knew that nothing would be done for the girl if I should. The French police were allowed to preserve order in Paris during the day. At night, after curfew hours, the Germans were in control; French policemen were not even in the streets. All I could do was watch the scene from my window, helplessly, while longing to do something about it. A car suddenly pulled up to the curb, the girl was picked up in the officer's arms, he put her quickly into the car, got in after her, the door slammed and the automobile drove swiftly away.

Incidents frequently were happening, for which there never was any explanation. Madame de Bretteville, a friend of ours, telephoned me late one evening in great distress, saying that her husband had failed to come home for dinner, had not telephoned, still had not appeared. He was a director of one of the big Paris banks. His wife had telephoned one of his associates when her husband had failed to appear for dinner, but he could tell her nothing that would explain his absence. Monsieur de Bretteville, he said, had left the bank at the usual hour, had said nothing of any engagements, appeared to be in good spirits. The next morning I telephoned my friend and she told me that her husband was still missing. The bank, the police were doing everything they could to trace him but it was several days before they found him—in the Santé prison, a famous prison for political prisoners on the Left Bank. It was two or three more days before she could get permission to see her husband and when she finally did get to him, she found him in a pitiable condition. He had no idea why he had been arrested, no explanation had been made. He simply had been placed under arrest as he was leaving the bank the day of his disappearance, and taken to the jail where he was held incommunicado. The prison was a filthy one, he had been given scarcely anything to eat, and the shock and humiliation of his arrest was almost more than he could bear. He was released two or three days later, no explanation having been made as to why he had been held. He was highly respected in banking circles, not a Jew; no one ever knew the reason for his arrest which had been ordered by the Germans. It took Monsieur de Bretteville months to recover from his experience.

Another friend of mine had a more amusing experience to tell me one afternoon when I went to have tea with her at her home. She was a Parisienne, witty, vivacious, and she felt very bitter about France's having signed an armistice instead of having continued the fight, in Africa, in England, wherever she could. She resented the presence of the Nazis in her beloved Paris, and showed her contempt for them in every way she could. She had taken no notice since June, 1940, of the regulations which had been in effect since the war. She lowered her shades at night, but did not draw the black curtains nor conform with the *Défense Passive* rules. Her apartment was in a small street, the rue de la Faisanderie, so her windows were not noticed until several months after the German occupation of Paris when, one evening toward eight o'clock, the maid announced that a French policeman was at the door and wished to speak to Madame. My friend went to find out what he wanted. It was about her windows. One could see her lights plainly, from the street, and that, as Madame knew, was against the rules. No, Madame did not know—what rules? Why, the *Défense Passive* regulations that had been in effect ever since the outbreak of war. "Oh, but the war is over now," said Madame. "Why no, we still are at war," replied the *agent* somewhat testily. "Ah *oui*? Against whom, *alors*?" asked my friend in her most artless manner. The policeman looked at her and then laughed. "Yes, I know it is ridiculous," he conceded, "but we must obey orders all the same. I am afraid you will have to do something about your windows—." Madame did so, but with better grace, having been able to speak her little piece, having found that there were some policemen in Paris who morally, at any rate, were not under the domination of the Nazis. It used to sicken us all to see them saluting smartly every time a German officer passed them as they (*les agents*) stood at their traffic posts throughout Paris. One of my friends remarked bitterly one day as we saw an *agent de police* draw himself up stiffly and salute a Nazi officer who was walking in front of us, "The French police never saluted my husband like that, nor any other French officer." Her husband who had been a Colonel in the French army, had been killed in action in May, 1940. It is true, the gendarmes never had saluted French officers, but they never had received orders to do so. Now they did have strict orders to come to attention for all German officers, and to salute them, but it always seemed to us that they did it with unction, with more enthusiasm than they were obliged to manifest.

When the English, through the B.B.C., told us about their "V" cam-

paign, it was a source of great annoyance and irritation to the Germans for several days. The "V" sign was everywhere, scribbled on walls, sidewalks, in the subway stations. It was an offense punishable by death to write anything against the Germans in a public place, but a letter V did not take long to write, and it spoke volumes. The Germans had to find an antidote. They found one in the good old homeopathic theory "*Similia similibus curantur*"—like cures like; they adopted the "V" sign for their own. German cars emerged from garages where, overnight, V's had been painted, in white, on the gray mudguards, with laurel wreaths tastefully arranged around the V for emphasis. The V was painted all over Paris, big wooden V's hung in front of buildings the Germans had requisitioned, and one could no longer point to the V's on the walls and pavements as proof of the Parisian desire for an English victory. It might have been young Nazis who had scribbled those V's in chalk, so there was one less worry for the Germans. They pointed out that V stood for Victory in German and Italian as well as in English and French, but they must have resorted to poetic license in this, so far as their own language was concerned, for, in all the German dictionaries I consulted, Victory in German is *Seig* and so begins with an S, not a V. Perhaps Goebbels invented another word to suit the occasion; at any rate, they do consider the V as belonging just as much to them as it does to us, and they even used the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven's as a prelude to some of their propaganda broadcasts, after the B.B.C. had been using it for some time.

No one was allowed to take snapshots in Paris without a permit from the Germans; anyone seen taking pictures anywhere had his camera confiscated unless he could produce that permit. People did take pictures without getting caught, and developed and printed the films in secret, but they were taking great risks when they did so, for the penalty for this was very severe. Jimmie Worden took some fine photographs in Paris. He had his tiny Leica with him always, in his pocket, and when he saw a particularly interesting poster the Germans had affixed to the walls, or anything else which intrigued him, he would whip out his camera, snap the picture, and get the camera back into his pocket before anyone could catch him. He often posted me as lookout, and I would warn him if or when I saw a German coming, or a policeman. We would be standing respectfully before the poster, reading it with proper awe when the German got near, but as soon as he had passed, the picture would quickly be taken.

I did not know about this order when I first arrived in Paris. Rose-Hélène was feeding the pigeons at the Etoile and I was taking pictures of her doing so when a policeman came to us and told me that it was not allowed, now, to take pictures without a special permit. I so obviously had been unaware of this, and the pictures I had been taking were so innocent, the *agent* did not confiscate my camera, but he warned me to put it away and take it home at once, which I promised to do. He informed me, at the same time, that it was no longer permitted to feed the pigeons. We had been taking dried bread crumbs to them; poor things, they were not fat and sleek as they had used to be. I pointed out to the policeman that this was stale bread which could not be used for anything else, but he said it could always be put into soup—in any case, I must not bring bread to the pigeons again or I would be fined. So the pigeons did not get fed, by us or by anyone else. Not long after, they were caught and sold in the markets, to be eaten. The Arc de Triomphe did not seem the same after they had gone.

One afternoon I had tea with a French lady in her apartment on the Avenue Hoche. As we sipped our tisane—which was all she had to offer in the way of something hot to drink—she said to me, “I am sorry you could not have been here yesterday. I would have liked you to meet my son who came in for tea with me.” I looked at her in surprise. “But I thought your son was with the Fighting French forces in England.” “He is,” she replied calmly, “but he comes over occasionally on business. When he does, he tries to get in to have tea and a chat with me before flying back.” I did not, of course, ask her where his plane had landed, or whether he descended by parachute, or from where he took off for the return flight, and she never told any but her most trusted friends of her son’s visits. I am sure he was not the only Frenchman who paid these informal and “flying” visits to his country. These visits may have been one way in which the English kept so well informed as to what was going on in France. Something would happen and they would know of it a few hours later—and would disclose their knowledge over the radio, or in more dramatic ways. There was the incident of the bombing by the R.A.F. of a town in Brittany where newly arrived German troops were digging in for a long stay. The General Headquarters established itself in a house belonging to a prominent general of the French army. Not that the house was any more comfortable than a number of others, but the idea appealed to them, for the Germans do have a love for cheap, theatrical effects. They

arrived in the afternoon, and that very night the town was bombed by the English, the objective being the General's house. The place was destroyed and all the German officers killed as they lay in their beds. So sudden and unexpected was the attack, they had no time to seek shelter from the raid.

Those towns along the Breton coast were taking a beating from the R.A.F. those days, and I asked a Frenchman whose business took him often to Brest and other points in Brittany, whether the French in those regions resented their towns being bombed by the British. He assured me that they did not. That, on the contrary, they were delighted when the planes came over, they wanted them to come often, and he told me that the stories about the Bretons waving at the English planes and cheering the pilots were quite true. Even when the pilots missed their targets, which, as the people knew, were German military objectives, and hit the buildings and houses belonging to the French, there was no resentment. This man had occasion to go to Brest only a few days after the hospital had been bombed and several patients killed. The people of Brest with whom he talked—and he made it a point to talk to a great many—all asseverated that the hospital had been bombed, not by the R.A.F. but by the Luftwaffe. They said they knew the sound of British motors, the tone of which is steadier and higher pitched than the pulsating throb of German planes. They stoutly maintained that they had heard the British planes come over during the early part of the night, bomb their objectives and go on their way. The hospital had not been touched. Then, an hour or so later, came the sound of other planes—this time, they vowed, German planes. And this time, the hospital was struck, and the tragedy denounced by the Nazi-controlled radio and newspapers the next morning as another British outrage.

A number of English prisoners were held in the hospital in the rue de Val de Grâce. They had been ill or wounded when captured, most of them had recovered by June, 1941, when I went to see them one day with Monica. They were allowed visitors twice a week and a great many people went to see them, including French women, who took them cigarettes and biscuits, whatever could be found to take to them. Two of the officers came from a district in England not very far from Monica's home, so those three had a nice chat while I talked with some Scottish officers. Monica and I went again, a few days later, to pay them another visit—and found that they had gone. Not to a prison camp in Germany where they were to have been sent, any day, but—

back to England. Civilian clothes had been smuggled in to them by visitors and money had been given to them; they had everything necessary to make their escape. When Monica got back to England, she wrote me that she had communicated with the wife of one of the officers who told Monica that her husband and his comrade had returned to England, had taken a rest, and then had been sent overseas with their regiment.

This all happened about the time of the trial of Miss James, the directress of the Y.W.C.A. in Paris. Miss James had been arrested by the Germans in the fall of 1940, who announced that she would be put to death. No one ever knew the real reason for her having been arrested; some said that she had been caught listening to the B.B.C.; others said that she had been sending messages to England and one had been intercepted; the consensus of opinion was that she had kept an Englishman in hiding in the Y.W.C.A. overnight. She was tried in the spring of 1941, the Germans brought witnesses from the internment camp at Vittel in an effort to prove her guilt and have her condemned to death. But Miss James had been loved by everybody and every witness at the trial spoke highly of her, so she was sentenced by the French court to hard labor rather than death.

XII

A few days after Rose-Hélène and Cécile had left, the superintendent of our apartment had occasion to speak to me about something and, during the conversation he said, "You have sent your baby and maid to the country?" I told him I had. He hesitated, then, averting his eyes from mine he said, "I suppose you know what your maid was doing here in Paris?" "Doing?" I enquired, mystified. Poor Cécile. What was she to be accused of now? First Véronique, now my Parisian landlord. This time, however, it was something really serious. The superintendent imparted the astonishing news that Cécile had rarely spent a night in her room, but had spent it with a German orderly living in the servants' quarters of the hotel across the street! He said that she had begun going out evenings about one month after our arrival in Paris; she would go out just before eleven o'clock, when she knew I was in for the night and would not be coming to her room for anything. No wonder she had taken no interest lately in her work, and had often

overslept until eight o'clock and even after! She had not been doing her work as well as at L'Ormeau, and I remembered what my mother-in-law had told me. Cécile had become lazy, seemed *distracte*, and I had caught her in a few lies. I had already made up my mind to send her back to her home when I decided to send Rose-Hélène to Les Chênes and I thought that move would also decide the problem of Cécile. She could take care of Rose-Hélène under the eye of my mother-in-law, and, in her own country, she might again be the satisfactory servant she always had been. But never had I suspected anything like this about our Cécile! She was just sixteen years old, I did not suppose she had begun taking an interest in boys, and had never dreamed that she could be seduced by a German when she thought of all we had gone through at L'Ormeau because of them, when she realized that her salary was paid by a man who was held prisoner by them. I questioned the concierge, reluctant to believe the story, but there was no doubt, alas, about its authenticity. The concierge told me that he had confronted Cécile as she was coming in one morning at five o'clock, had told the girl that he and his wife knew what she was up to, threatened to tell me if she did not behave herself. Cécile, terrified, promised that she would not go out any more at night, begged them not to tell me what she had been doing, but said that she intended to continue seeing the German, because she loved him! He was married and much older than she; he had shown her pictures of his wife and children at home, but he had also given her presents—I had noticed her stockings, and had wondered where she had found them, how she could afford them on the small salary I paid her. And one day she had appeared with a handsome new purse, much finer than any of mine. These, and other presents, had been given her by Hans and that had been going on for more than two months without my ever having known or suspected that Cécile was anything but an innocent baby. I was furious with myself for having been so easily hoodwinked, outraged to think that Cécile, whom I had so liked and trusted, had deceived me in so detestable a way, and horrified when I thought of her lost virginity. I felt responsible for what had happened; if I hadn't brought Cécile to Paris, if I had watched her more closely, this would not have occurred, I told myself, remorsefully. I talked the matter over with Beatrix and Eric. They, being French, found the story highly diverting, and "comforted" me by assuring me that Cécile probably had never been as pure and innocent as I had thought her. Peasants

from our Department, they told me, matured very young, and Cécile had never looked to them like a young girl unaware of the facts of life. After all, I do not know how she could have been, for her home conditions were appalling, but Cécile had seemed greatly superior to her surroundings and to her parents. She was intelligent, had a sense of humor and was, I thought, capable of deep and loyal devotion. I had thought that, removed from her depressing if not degrading environment, she might be able to develop into someone quite worthwhile. I had intended to do a lot for the girl, help her with her dowry when she married, and had always been kind to her, treating her with a friendliness French servants did not usually receive from their employers. And now—this! I did not know what to do about it. If I wrote and told my mother-in-law, she would discharge Cécile at once, without a reference, then the girl would never find work with anyone else in that part of the country. So I wrote Cécile, letting her infer from what I said that I knew what she had been doing. I expressed my disappointment in her, told her that I was writing Madame to tell her that if Cécile did not behave with the strictest propriety, she was to be discharged at once. Cécile replied in a letter stained with tears, to say that she was *desolée* at all that had happened, and to know that she had displeased Madame, but that Madame would have no cause for concern as to her future conduct, she would lead an exemplary life.

Cécile either did keep her promise to me, or she deceived my mother-in-law as cleverly as she had me, for I got good reports about her during the five months she was at Les Chênes.

I went to L'Ormeau in June to get summer clothes and more trunks, as it had become evident by that time that it would not be safe to return there permanently. If I were to stay in the occupied zone, it would be best to be in Paris, from where I could leave quickly if the need arose, so I got L'Ormeau and my own affairs in order for a prolonged absence.

The evacuees were still living in our stables, had been there for a year. They were longing, all of them, to return to their homes in the north of France. Although they realized that they would find only a heap of rubble where their houses had stood, they wanted to get back to their own little plots of ground. Since they were unable to do this, their homes being in the forbidden zone of France, I gave each of them a garden plot for them to work and plant for their own. Two new babies had been born in our stables since the arrival of the evacuees

there, one of them having been named Marguerite in honor of the mistress of L'Ormeau which had given them shelter. They stayed until the end of 1942, when I received news that the last of the evacuees had departed for the north of France, leaving the stables empty and silent once more.

The Germans had never come back to our region since their departure in January, and we all hoped they never would return. But I told Véronique to be sure to take the paper off our front door which announced the fact that the owner of the chateau was an American, the moment the United States should enter the war, and to wrap the American flag in brown paper and put it back in the attic once more, there to stay until it could be taken out to fly over L'Ormeau in celebration of another Allied victory.

The price of land in our Department had gone up, the past months, by leaps and bounds. A tract of eighteen acres had been offered for sale the year before for ten thousand dollars; the price had been considered too high and no one had bought the land. In 1941, offers came in from all sides and the tract finally was sold for thirty thousand dollars. Land in that Department, which was not a small one, was bringing three hundred dollars an acre—when you could get it. The “return to the soil” feeling had swept all over France; people felt that it was the only safe investment to make, and that if one had farm land, one would not starve. But land was difficult to buy, those who owned any wanted to hold on to every square inch they had, and many would-be purchasers were unable to buy because they could not produce sufficient proof that they were of Aryan descent. A French law was passed, soon after the German occupation of France, that no one could buy property unless he could prove that, for at least three generations, there had been no Jewish blood in the family. It sometimes was almost impossible to get all the birth certificates necessary to purchase a house or a few acres of land—the money part was the least of most people’s worries. Nearly everyone had money, for there was nothing to buy by 1941 in France; no diamonds were to be had, no gold; expensive clothes and furs were scarce. Those who did have a little money were in the unusual situation of having nothing on which to spend it—and everyone wanted to get rid of their francs, feeling that they soon would have little if any value.

From L'Ormeau I went to spend a few days at Les Chênes. There I found Rose-Hélène brown and sturdy, where she had been pale and

delicate in Paris. There had been none of the frequent and inexplicable vomiting spells which she had had in Paris, and she was eating well, with a keen appetite. When I saw how well she was, I knew I would have to leave her in the country a while longer, and her grandparents were only too happy to keep her. We were now a harmonious, united family. My parents-in-law were so pleased and so proud of the way I had defended L'Ormeau and our interests there, they forgot their original resentment at my having gone there and their bitterness at my having married into the family. They told their friends that even a French girl could not have accomplished, alone, what I had done, and they told someone else that, if only Robert had told them, from the very beginning what kind of person I was, they would have behaved quite differently about our marriage. Poor Robert—how many times had he tried to tell them a little about me, and they had refused to listen to or believe him. And I knew what my family-in-law perhaps did not realize, that I could not have got as close to them in years of normal times as I had in the few months during the fall of France.

My father-in-law recounted to me an incident which had taken place at a town near Les Chênes. It was a fairly important *Kommandantur*, about one thousand troops were stationed there. The post office was about five miles from the *Kommandantur*, and two soldiers were detailed to go, every day at the same hour, on their bicycles to get the sack of mail addressed to that Headquarters. One day as they were riding back with the mail bag, a car approached them at high speed, coming from the direction of the town where the *Kommandantur* was located. There were two German captains in the car; they stopped the two soldiers on the bicycles, told them that the Kommandant was anxious to have the mail as soon as possible that morning, and had sent these two officers to bring it back in the car. The sack was handed over by the two soldiers to their superior officers—a German officer's orders are never questioned by their men. The car turned around and sped back in the direction of the town, was soon out of sight. When the soldiers arrived at headquarters some twenty minutes later, they were asked for the mail. They said that it was already with the *Kommandant*, and they told about the two Captains who had come for it. Naturally, it was discovered that they had been neatly tricked; the Kommandant never received that day's mail. It was in the hands of the English.

I left my little car at Les Chênes, and my radio which I had brought

from L'Ormeau, and my jewel case. I kept with me no valuable jewelry except my engagement ring and a string of pearls Robert had bought Rose-Hélène just before he returned to the Front after his first leave. No one could know what the next few months might bring, and I did not want to have to worry about possessions when there would be more important things to think about. We arranged that, if I should have to go to the unoccupied zone, I would go to Toulouse, where my mother-in-law's only sister had a villa. She, tante Odile, had already written that she would be glad to receive me with Rose-Hélène if I should have to leave the occupied zone. She was a widow, living in her large villa with a widowed daughter and the latter's two children, so there would be plenty of room for her nephew and godson's wife and child. We arranged, therefore, that, in case of emergency, I was to get to Toulouse as best I could, and my mother-in-law would see that Rose-Hélène got to me soon after. I kissed my baby good-bye, for another brief separation, kissed my parents-in-law good-bye for what I felt would be a longer one, and went back to Paris, prepared, now, to leave at a moment's notice.

XIII

On June 22nd, German troops invaded the territory of the Soviet Union. Russia and Germany were at war. The news acted like a tonic for the French people. No one believed that Russia could hold out longer than a month or two, the more optimistic of the armchair strategists gave her four months, until the winter, but at least there would be a few hundred thousand less Germans by the end of the year, and that would be something to be thankful for, said the French. The atmosphere of Paris was charged with excitement that day, and there was the festive air of a holiday; newspapers were sold faster than the kiosks could be kept supplied with them, people stood talking in excited groups, and the French faces looked more alive than I had seen them for more than a year.

A few days later, I went to the American Library to get a fresh supply of books to carry me through the evenings which were rather long and lonely without a little girl to keep me company, to put to bed, to read a story to before we both settled down for the night. One of the librarians was married to a White Russian who had lost his money and his estates in the revolution following the last war. He had

been biding his time all those years, waiting for an opportunity to go back to Russia, to see what had happened to his house in Leningrad, to his properties in the Ukraine. I found the librarian, Princess Melikoff, in tears. Her husband had enlisted with the Nazis and was leaving the following day for the Russian front. His big moment had come, he was going back to Russia; he didn't care how, or with whom, the only thing that mattered to him was the fact that he would, once more, set foot on Russian soil and could kill a few of the Red Russians who had robbed him of his lands and his money. The Germans promised to restore to any Russian who joined their ranks, whatever property they may have had before the revolution, and this was tempting bait which many of the White Russians in France could not resist. Prince Melikoff had kept, locked in a box of souvenirs, the key to his house in Leningrad. That key he now put in an inside pocket of his Nazi uniform, hoping and expecting to fit it in the lock of the front door of his old home within a month or two. He confidently told his wife to wait quietly for him in Paris until he should send for her, at the victorious conclusion of the German campaign in Russia.

She was still waiting when I left Paris more than a month later, and when I had a post card from her six months after that. At that time, she had been without news from her husband for many weeks, and was worried about him in the cold of the Russian winter in the front lines of the German army—and not, as he had expected, in his home in Leningrad. I wonder where she is now (she was a Mexican citizen) and where her husband is? Whether he still is treasuring the key to his house after three years?

Monica, by June 1941, was beginning to feel restless. She felt that she ought to be moving on her way before the Germans discovered that her health had improved. She told me, quite quietly one day, that she would kill herself before she would permit the Germans to take her again, and subject her to the indignities, humiliations and mental and physical suffering she had endured at Besançon, and I am convinced that she would have done it. She and several other women who had been released from Besançon and Vittel had been trying, ever since their release, to find a way to escape from France and return to England. They heard of a man who would fly them to a point in Ireland, from where they could easily get to England. For this service, he asked one hundred and fifty pounds (about \$675), payable upon arrival in Ireland. He gave the names of one or two people he had taken to and

brought from there, and, upon investigation, this was found to be true. He owned a bi-motor plane in which he did take a number of people back and forth from Paris to Ireland. Monica finally decided against this, fearing that she could not stand the strain of such a trip. She preferred to wait until she heard of some other way to get out of France. She knew that there was a possibility that I might have to cross the line of demarcation *en fraude*, so she might be able to make her break for freedom with me.

Monica still was obliged to sign every day at the police station of her *arrondissement*, but she had noticed that the police were getting rather lax about the register in which she signed her name. They left it lying carelessly on a table near the door where it could be signed without their being disturbed, and they scarcely noticed or glanced at the quiet little woman who slipped noiselessly into the police station, signed her name and slipped out again. The policemen were supposed to write the dates in the margin of the register each day, but they had been neglecting that, and Monica was filling in the dates herself. She saw that it would be possible for her to sign for two days, one day in advance, which would give her twenty-four hours in which to make her escape before her absence would be noticed. She bought a black patent leather bag, the kind the poorer French use for their marketing, and she planned to carry in that bag whatever she took with her on her trip, leaving most of her clothes in her hotel room, to allay suspicion as long as possible. She would leave her silver toilet articles on the dressing table, her valises would be in their usual place, her clothes hanging in the closet, she would even leave her blue fox scarf. She would walk out of the hotel some morning, much as usual, with only a shopping bag over her arm. She hoped that the hotel manager would not report her absence to the police when she failed to return that evening, if he discovered her room looking as though she would come back after, perhaps, only a night spent with friends. So Monica was ready to go, but she left it more or less to me to tell her how, where and when to cross that line of demarcation.

I had been told at the American Consulate in Paris that orders might come, any day, for the American Consular officials and personnel in occupied France to leave, in which case the Consulate would be closed, and those Americans who remained in the occupied zone would have to send their passports to the Embassy in Berlin for renewals or validations; there would remain only the Swiss Consulate in Paris to which

to appeal for advice or protection. This idea did not appeal to me, and I decided that, if the Consulates in the occupied zone should have to close, I would not remain in that zone. But, where to go? The unoccupied zone held no allure for me, as I knew that the food situation was as bad as if not worse than in Paris, and the winter would present heating problems as in the occupied zone. While I could go to tante Odile's upon arrival in the free zone, I could not stay there indefinitely as she was having great difficulty finding enough food for her own household, and the idea of looking for a house in Toulouse, or staying at a hotel there, did not tempt me—even if I could get an *Ausweis* from the Germans to go there, which was extremely unlikely.

I still did not want to go back to the United States, for I had not lost hope of Robert's return, and I did not want to put Rose-Hélène and myself so far from him and his letters. I received news from him every ten days or two weeks, and these letters were a great comfort and inspiration to me. We had arranged a code before he left so we had no difficulty keeping one another informed to the most minute detail in our lives. By the same token, I was able to write fully and often to him, and my letters strengthened and encouraged him, as did the fact that his wife and baby were still waiting in France for his return. Still, he did not want me to remain in the occupied zone, for he feared that I might be interned and he constantly urged me to leave before it was too late. But he did not want me to go to America, he asked me to stay somewhere on his side of the Atlantic that we might quickly and easily get to one another if he should be released or succeed in escaping. Switzerland was out of the question; the poor French franc had almost no value there. At that time, you had to pay sixty French francs for one Swiss franc. That meant that you would be paying thirty French francs (seventy-five cents) for a newspaper—and the cost of rents, food, et cetera, would be catastrophic. That just was not possible. I looked at the map to see where we could go. Not too far from Robert, where the French franc would be good—why yes, there was French Morocco. Why not go there? The food situation was much better than in metropolitan France, we would not freeze to death, and money could be sent there from the occupied zone, francs which would have the same value as in France.

I was granted a visa by the American Consulate for travel to and residence in French Morocco—after a few days' argument and persuasion—then the question was, how to get there. I first had to get out

of France. Out of *occupied* France. The American Consulate told me that the chances of my getting an *Ausweis* from the Germans were very slight. They promised to try to get one for me, but after two weeks they told me it was hopeless. Twenty-seven passports had been given by the American Consulate to the *Kommandantur* in Paris, an *Ausweise* requested for each, about a month before. The *Ausweise* were never granted—and the twenty-seven passports were never returned to the American Consulate or to their owners. Fortunately for me, my passport was not among those so lost to the Germans, for it had been held in a safe at the Consulate until those others should be returned. No *Ausweise* were granted American citizens who wanted to leave the occupied zone that early summer of 1941, but I was thankful at least to get my passport back; I did not see just how I would get out of the occupied zone to go to Morocco without an *Ausweis*, but I certainly could not have gone minus both *Ausweis* and passport.

At that time, one could travel freely within the limits of the occupied zone. You never were asked to show your papers on trains or buses in that part of France. The Germans concentrated on guarding the line of demarcation, and didn't seem to care how much traveling you did, so long as you stayed within the boundaries of the occupied zone. No one, Frenchman or foreigner, was prevented from taking a train within the confines of that zone, so I knew it would be an easy matter to get to some point near the line of demarcation and there await my chance to get out of that part of France. The question was, to which point along the long line ought I to go—where was there the least danger? If you were crossing from one zone to another with an *Ausweis*, there were only twelve points at which you were allowed to cross, and you had to leave and reenter by the same town. These were:

Orthez, and Sauveterre; Landes

Langon; Gironde

Menesterol; Dordogne

La Rochefoucault; Charente

La Chapelle Morthemer, and Jarden; Vienne

Vierzon, and Bourges; Cher

Moulins; Allier

Digoin, Hautefond, and Chalon-sur-Saône; Saône et Loire

If you were going without an *Ausweis*, you had to plan your campaign carefully. Before attempting the hazardous business of getting from

one part of France to the other, a map had to be carefully studied, many factors taken into consideration: Was the line a natural barrier, like a river or a forest, or was it an open highway? Was it guarded by patrols only, or did they have police dogs at that point? When did the guards eat, what hours did they change shifts? These last would vary from day to day. A spot which would be fairly safe today might be extremely dangerous tomorrow, and one would be discouraged by everyone at attempting to cross there. I had reached no plan or conclusion when I had, one day, a visit from one of Robert's comrades who had been released because he had four children. Ambassador Scapini had succeeded in obtaining the release of those French prisoners of war who had served in the World War of 1914, or who had four or more children. Monsieur Dupont was in both categories, so he was among the first of the French prisoners to be liberated.

Robert had asked him to come and see me—Monsieur Dupont showed me a cigarette paper on which, in almost microscopic letters, were written the names of sixty-two people to whom he had been asked to write or go and see on behalf of his comrades left behind in Oflag XIX-Y. My name was on that list. Robert wanted him to give me details of his life which he could not write me, and to impress upon me the importance of my leaving the occupied zone as soon as possible. When I told him that I had been trying, without success, to find a point along the line where it would be safe to cross, he told me of a sister-in-law who was going, early in August, to see her husband, Monsieur Dupont's brother, an escaped prisoner of war who was living in the free zone. The wife remained in Paris, taking care of the little business and the children, and went, every two or three months, to spend a few days with her husband. She never bothered about trying to get an *Ausweis* as she had a very good system for crossing the line without one. Monsieur Dupont said he thought she would be willing to take me with her if he asked her to do it as a favor to him, which he would do. She would probably come to see me a little later to talk to me about it.

Then we talked about Robert. My husband, he said, had lost forty-five pounds since his imprisonment. He had weighed 170 pounds when he was taken prisoner, so he now weighed only a few pounds more than I did. Several of his teeth had become loose and had had to be extracted, and he only thirty-three years old. His hair, so thick and wavy, had been cropped, as were the heads of all the prisoners, because of the lice and fleas and other vermin. In spite of all this, my husband

kept himself in good spirits and did what he could to cheer those of his comrades who were melancholy or depressed. He refused to volunteer for any kind of work to help the Germans and so stayed in the camp every day, with nothing to do. One day followed the other with deadly, dreary monotony; the days became weeks, months, then years.

Because there was nothing in the external lives of these men to give them comfort or cheer, they turned their thoughts inward, and sought relief in that inner life from the drabness of their existence. In their soul-searching and introspection, they discovered depths to their characters which had never before been plumbed; they found hidden reserves of strength and courage they had not suspected they had. Men who, like Robert, had never known privation or mental or physical pain, became aware, through their own anguish, of the suffering of those around them. Those who had been too proud, learned humility; the selfish became thoughtful of others; the impetuous learned patience and forbearance; the prejudiced became tolerant. There was a magnificent spirit of comradeship among those men who had come from all walks of life and who, in their civilian lives, had had nothing whatever in common. For now there was their unhappiness and their despair to bind them together. They became united, through this common denominator, in their prison camp as they had never been in France. They shared their parcels, there was never any friction, no disputes among those fifty thousand men whose nerves must have been tense and strained.

Most of the men finally became deeply religious. As a fragile, exquisite flower will spring up in the midst of a swamp, so the flower of religion has blossomed in the ugliness of those German prison camps, and the Nazis have been powerless to stamp it out. They can and do control the actions of their captives, often forbidding the holding of religious services in the camps, but they are unable to reach into the hearts of those men and destroy what is slowly but surely making the prisoners stronger than their captors whose only weapons are the guns in their hands. The force of Good *is* stronger than the force of Evil. The bodies of the men are held captive behind electrified barbed wires, but their souls and spirits are free. These last three years have been crucifying years for those millions of men in the prison camps of Europe and Asia, but the day of liberation will come, and they will emerge from the camps, purified by their experience and Europe and the world

will surely be a better place and they better men, because of what they have suffered, and learned through their suffering.

I had felt all this stirring in my husband's soul, through his letters, and had felt that that was what was happening in his camp; Monsieur Dupont confirmed my impression, and I felt much better for having talked to him. It warmed and comforted me only to touch his hand when we said good-bye, for so very lately, my Robert's hand had touched the one I now was holding. It made my husband seem nearer to me than he had been for more than a year, since I last had seen him.

XIV

A few days later, Monsieur Dupont's sister-in-law called on me to discuss plans for my escape and her visit to the unoccupied zone. By a happy coincidence, the point where she always crossed was not far from Michel's estate. Her system seemed to be an easy one with very little walking involved, and costing little, so I suggested that Monica go with us. But Madame Dupont was afraid that three women would attract attention, it would be best for only two to go. Poor Monica, I just could not leave her behind, in the occupied zone, so I persuaded Madame Dupont to take Monica with her; I would go to Michel's and find a way to get across alone, from there. We arranged to meet at Cholet on the first of August. I would go, a few days before, to stay with Michel and plan my crossing. Monica, Madame Dupont and I would meet in the station at Cholet on August first, I would tell them where and how I was going into the free zone and we could arrange to meet at a fixed point on the other side of the line if and when we all got over safely.

The American Consulate closed its doors the middle of July, and the officials and personnel departed for Lisbon. They had been unable to do anything for those Americans who had remained too long in the occupied zone, many of whom, like myself, would have liked to go now that there would no longer be Consular representatives in that part of France. No one had many illusions as to how much the Swiss Consulate could do for us. As I said good-bye to those of the officials whom I knew, I told them I would see them again soon—in Lisbon. They did not seem too sanguine about this, but I told them to look for us, Rose-Hélène and me, in about a month.

My trunks had to be sent, railway express, to Toulouse—personal

effects could be sent to one zone from the other if the trunks or parcels could be opened and examined by the German control. Nothing written or printed was allowed to pass the line, so I put no books or letters in the trunks, and nothing of great value, except my camera (empty of course) and my typewriter. I had, in all, five pieces of baggage; this I asked Thomas Cook to send to Toulouse, to my aunt, I explained, who had left Paris in great haste at the time of the débâcle and now wanted her clothes. This information was written on the various forms which had to be filled out, and the trunks were sent off to tante Odile—before she even knew we were coming. The keys were attached to the baggage, and I could only hope that everything would go through all right. As I watched the expressman carrying them away, I wondered when I would catch up with them. I sent a postcard to tante Odile, telling her that Rose-Hélène and I expected to have an *Ausweis*, within a few days, to come to Toulouse to visit her, and I thanked her for her invitation. In a P.S. I told her that I had sent her trunks to her, as requested. I was fairly confident that she would puzzle the matter out, for everyone was accustomed, by that time, in France, to receiving mysterious messages, and to deciphering them.

I had several barrels of china which I had taken to France from the United States, trunks full of linen and silver, and other things I did not want to leave in the apartment and lose when America came into the war against Germany. So I had it all sent to a friend of ours who owned a large apartment house and could store it until our return to Paris—whenever that might be. Two men arrived with a hand cart to transport the things; I could not believe, when I first saw the cart, that the men could get even half the amount I had, on that small pushcart, but with the skill of necessity and of experience, they got it *all* on! There were at least seven barrels, three or four large trunks, Rose-Hélène's Kiddie Koop and a play pen, her folding baby carriage and a divan bed. Two men pulled this cart half way across the city, carried it up to the third floor storeroom, and charged me five dollars (for both, not apiece) for their work.

On July 27th, I left Paris for Cholet, taking an early morning train; I had reserved a seat several days before, else I would have had to stand. Travel was discouraged, with so few trains running, and every train pulled out of every station packed to the doors. Even the toilets were occupied by people who could not find seats or standing space elsewhere. If you were obliged to pay a visit to the W.C. during the journey, you

would have to fight your way along the corridor, ask the person who would be sitting on the wash basin, and the one who would be occupying the toilet, whether they would mind stepping outside for a moment. They would wait outside the door for you to come out and give them their "compartment" again. This train was packed, like all the others, but with only a blue canvas zipper bag to carry, and my reserved seat, the trip was a comfortable one in spite of the July heat. This one bag, containing overnight things, a few of Robert's letters, was all I would have until I arrived in Toulouse, a journey of some eighteen hours by train from Paris, but I knew it would be a matter of days before I would reach there—how many, I could not know.

Michel met me at the station at Cholet from where we took a bus which set us down about eight miles from his estate, Tranquillité. Michel had two bicycles waiting there for us, but I never have mastered the art of riding a bicycle, a fact which I had cause to regret more than once during the years of war and occupation in France. I regretted it terribly that day, as we wondered how I could get those last eight miles until Michel saw one of his farmers who happened to be in the village with his horse and two-wheeled cart. I was boosted up into the cart and rode in state among the sacks of flour and other provisions to Tranquillité.

Michel made inquiries among his friends as to the best way to get across the line of demarcation which was many miles from where we then were. Several suggestions were made, most of them seemed too dangerous. One was for me to ride on a barge down the Loire River, hidden under tarpaulin. Another was that I should hide in the luggage compartment of a car which was soon going, with a permit, into the free zone. That had been done, and got away with, but it was highly uncomfortable to sit, as one had to, in a cramped position, without light or much air; one trembled every time the car stopped, not knowing when the lid would be lifted and a German face appear. We finally decided upon something which did not seem too difficult or too dangerous. Monsieur Dubois, a friend of Michel's and a lawyer, knew the mayor of Vezelay, which town was situated just on the line. The mayor had helped many people over the line, among them, friends of Monsieur Dubois. The idea was for me to go to Vezelay by bus from Cholet, see the mayor, tell him I had come from Monsieur Dubois and ask him to help me get across the line, which Monsieur Dubois was confident the mayor would do. Michel offered to go with me as far as Vezelay, to

introduce me to the mayor and help in any other way he could, but this was considered too dangerous as there were so many Germans in that town, to watch new arrivals as well as to guard the line. A man and a woman together, two strangers, probably would attract the attention of the watchful Germans, whereas a woman alone might escape their notice. So I would have to do it all alone. Michel had a chicken roasted for me, a loaf cake baked, and some hard-boiled eggs prepared. I had reason later to be grateful for that precaution.

Michel took me to Cholet by the early morning train on Friday, August first. That was the day I was supposed to meet Monica and Madame Dupont at the station there, but neither Monica nor Madame Dupont ever turned up, although I met the train on which they were supposed to come, and waited for a later one. I was very worried about Monica. Was she ill, had she been unable to get away from Paris, had she been taken by the Germans, or had she lost her courage and remained in Paris? I hesitated about continuing my journey, leaving her practically alone and without friends in France, but I had gone so far with my plans I had to go on with them. The bus for Vezelay left Cholet at four o'clock and it was with great trepidation that I said good-bye to Michel and climbed into the bus.

As we approached our destination, I became more and more nervous. There were two German officers in the bus and a few of the civilians did not look too French, I noticed, as I looked surreptitiously about me at my fellow passengers. I was careful not to utter a word to anyone in the bus, and pretended to read, with great interest, my French newspaper, for I knew that, one word from me and I would be lost, betrayed by my accent. Those buses which went toward the line were kept under strictest surveillance, and I wondered whether our papers would be asked for as we got out at Vezelay. I thought of Robert; he, happily for his peace of mind, did not know what his wife was about to do. And I thought of my little Rose-Hélène, safe at Les Chênes with her grandparents and longed for the comfort and inspiration of her presence more at that moment than I ever had before.

We arrived at Vezelay toward five-thirty that afternoon. I had never been to this town, or even in the region before. All was strange to me and I felt that I looked strange to the inhabitants of the village (which was of about six thousand population) and to the Germans who were strolling about the streets, some of them watching the passengers descending from the bus. I got out with the others, including the German

officers, and walked quickly off in what I hoped was a jaunty and confident manner and in what I trusted was the right direction. I was feeling anything but jaunty, anything but confident, but was fervently wishing that I had not begun this enterprise and was safe in my apartment in Paris, or at L'Ormeau with Véronique and my baby. However, there was no use wishing. I wasn't in Paris, I wasn't at L'Ormeau, I wasn't even safe. That last I knew too well as I saw the number of Germans in the town, how alert they were, with what interest they regarded me. There was no nonsense about them, no flirting with the girls of the village, no drinking. The troops at Montigny had been more or less *en repos*, but these men were here for the important job of guarding that line of demarcation and of watching the people in the town to that end. How awful if I should have to ask the way to the *Mairie*—no, there it is; luckily, I had chosen the right direction.

The mayor was still in his office; I was asked to state my business with him, but said I could not do so, it being strictly personal. It was nearly six o'clock when I was ushered into the presence of Monsieur le Maire, an august gentleman with a frock coat and a jutting, aggressive little white beard, and piercing blue eyes which he fixed inquiringly upon me. How could I propose to this man that he help me break the law which he was there to enforce? I had no letters, no recommendations or credentials to substantiate the story I was about to tell him. In faltering French (I would have faltered even in English, I was so nervous and embarrassed), I explained that I was the sister-in-law of Michel de Vigny, the niece of the Marquise de Vendôme whom I had been told he would know. I told him that I was an American, my husband a prisoner in Germany, explained the necessity of my leaving the occupied zone before I, too, should be interned, told about the impossibility of my obtaining an *Ausweis* to get into the free zone, and said that I had come to Vezelay with the hope that, somehow, I might be able to cross the line at this point.

"But why," the mayor enquired sternly, "have you come to me?" I explained that it had been at the suggestion of Monsieur Dubois of Cholet whom I believed Monsieur le Maire knew—? He admitted that he knew Monsieur Dubois, but he still was at a loss to understand why he should have sent me to him, Monsieur le Maire. "Was it his idea and yours," he asked me, "that I should help you to get across the line?" I admitted, faintly, that there had been such a thought in the mind of Monsieur Dubois, and such a hope in my own. He feigned great indig-

nation, said he had never aided anyone to cross the line (I could not very well tell him I knew he was lying) and that he did not even countenance such illicit goings-on. He was very sorry, but he could do nothing for me.

"What, then, am I to do?" I asked, nearly in tears. "I have no idea in which direction the line is, I can't wander about the countryside trying to find it, or ask someone whether they could please direct me to it. I just cannot cross that line without help—can you not direct me to someone in the village who could be of assistance to me?" "No," said he, as he rose to his feet, "I cannot, I regret."

I was dismissed. It was too late to get back to Cholet that night, there was only one bus a day and that left at eight o'clock in the morning, so I would have to spend the night in Vezelay. Where could I sleep in that village which was teeming with Germans? If they should question me and I could give them no good reason for my being there, they would arrest me on suspicion, and goodness knew what disposition would be made of me. I walked slowly toward the door, feeling more forlorn than ever before in my life. My back must have eloquently portrayed my drooping spirits, for the mayor said suddenly to me, "If you will go across the street to that little café and tell the woman who runs it that I sent you, I think she might put you up for the night. It would be safer than the hotel."

This, at least, was something. I thanked the mayor and scurried across the street, into a dirty, dingy café filled with rough-looking men, some of whom were half drunk. They leered at me as I hurried to the back of the room where the frowsy woman who ran the place was sloshing the bar with a filthy rag. I told her that I had been sent by Monsieur le Maire to ask if she had a room she could rent me for the night. She glanced shrewdly at me and, without a word, led the way out a rear door and up a very dark, narrow, winding stair. On the third floor, she opened one of several closed doors. There was a very dirty room with a bed, a washstand, one straight-backed chair and a table. This, she said, was the only room she had. If I wanted to spend the night there, this was the room I would have to take. I told her it would do quite nicely, my heart sickening at the very thought of having to spend a night in this awful room. She asked me what I was doing in Vezelay and I told her, frankly. I knew that she suspected anyway. She showed no interest and no surprise at what I had told her, but merely said tonelessly, "Well, don't, on any account, go out into the street. You will get

caught if you do, for you don't look French. Have you anything with you to eat?" When I assured her that I had, she said that was good, for she could offer me nothing—and she went back downstairs to her customers.

I looked around the room, then went to the bed, and turned down the covers. Yes, just as I feared. Dirty sheets which obviously had not been changed since the last occupant, and, although no signs of insect life were then to be seen, I was certain that, when it was dark, the armies would march out of that dreadful mattress and attack. There was only one thing to do; get through that night as best I could, and take the bus back to Cholet the next morning. I ate a bit of chicken and a hard-boiled egg, and a piece of cake. This made me thirsty, but I did not dare drink the water which was in the cracked pitcher on the washstand, and I couldn't go down into that café for a glass of beer or something, so I stayed thirsty.

I sat on the straight-backed chair and looked out of the dormer window, keeping well behind the dusty curtain, that I might not be seen from the street by the Germans who were passing back and forth under the window. How I longed for something to read, but I had nothing but my diary, and my husband's two last letters. I read those over and cried a little, alone there in the twilight, feeling so far from him, so far from everyone and everything, hiding in this little town.

A knock came at the door and Madame Duval came in. She wanted to ask me some questions. What nationality was I? American? Oh, then I would not know how to speak English, would I? She was very surprised when I told her the two languages were the same. She asked me who and where my husband was, asked to see my papers. My passport did not tell her very much as she did not understand one word of English, but Robert's letters interested her. She read parts of them, looked at a little printed prayer which he had pasted on one of them, upon which he had written "*Ton mari qui t'aime.*" This impressed her more than anything else, but I could see that she still did not trust me. She told me that there was no hope whatever of my getting over the line from this point; that I could not do it alone, and she knew no one who could take me over. I said unhappily that I knew this was true, and that I would take the bus back to Cholet the next morning. She gave me a key, suggesting that I lock my door that night. I asked her whether the other rooms on that floor were occupied, and she replied, shortly, "Not always," bade me goodnight and went off down the stairs.

I was glad she had given me the key for, in the night, I heard the door knob turn, then heavy, stumbling footsteps go along the corridor to another room. The gentleman had mistaken the room. I was lying, fully dressed, on the floor. I couldn't bear to lie on the bed, even dressed, so I spread a blanket on the floor and spent the night there. There was a severe thunderstorm in the middle of the night, and I have always been terrified of them. I lay there, cowering with fear, and thinking what an ignominious end it would be for me if this place should be struck by one of those lightning bolts and my body be found among the charred ruins of this sordid little café. I slept very little and thankfully watched the sky getting bright, not with lightning flashes, but with the dawn.

There was no sunrise, it was a dull morning. The rain had stopped, but it threatened to begin again at any moment. This did not matter to me; I felt I should like to be washed by the clean rain after the dirt and filth of that horrid room.

About seven-thirty, I was half way down the dark stairs with my bag when I met Madame Duval on her way up. She motioned for me to go back to my room, followed me up and into the room, closed the door and said, in a whisper, "I have found someone who will take you across the line this morning. A friend of mine will come to get you about eleven o'clock." I was delighted and said I would wait, would be ready for the woman when she came. "Stay in your room," Madame Duval cautioned me, "until I come up again to tell you that my friend has arrived and the coast is clear."

So I settled down to a three-hour wait in that depressing room. I saw the bus leave at eight o'clock, and felt a vague regret at its departure. However, I soon would be leaving too, in another direction, and on foot. I nibbled a bit of cold chicken, ate another hard-boiled egg, and had a piece of cake. This was my breakfast; I thought longingly of a cup of hot tea, or of anything hot or wet, then told myself that it wouldn't be long now, and sat by the window to watch for my guide.

The hours passed slowly, oh, so slowly. Nine o'clock. Ten. Eleven. I began listening for a knock at the door. Twelve o'clock. And then one. Five hours I had been sitting there and no one had come. It was raining by this time, my stomach was empty and I felt thoroughly disheartened. In my desperation, I went downstairs, made a sign to Madame Duval that I should like to speak to her. We whispered in a kind of closet behind the bar. "Where is that woman?" I demanded. "You said that she would come at eleven; it is now one o'clock, why should she be

two hours late?" Madame Duval had no idea but said it might be because of the rain. We had to go through fields of grain to get across the line and we would get very wet in such a downpour—the guide might be waiting for the weather to clear. "That is nonsense," I replied, "it is the first time I ever heard of a peasant staying indoors because of the rain. She needn't worry for me, I don't mind getting wet, and it is better to go when the visibility is poor than after it clears. Please send word to your friend that I am most anxious to leave as soon as possible."

Madame Duval said she would send word by a boy whom she could trust, and would let me know the answer. I went back up to my hide-out under the eaves. At two o'clock, Madame Duval came to tell me that I would not be able to cross the line that day. Her friend had just been arrested by the Germans! She had been caught taking someone else over just before she was to come to get me. I must confess that I felt very little pity at that moment for that wretched woman; I felt only anger at her stupidity at getting caught, and panic for myself. What was I to do now? Suppose I had been the one to have got caught with her? I asked Madame Duval whether she could find someone else to shuttle me over, but she said she did not know of anyone just then. Since it was Saturday, someone might be coming to town during the afternoon from the other side of the line; if she saw anyone she knew, she would ask them if they could take me back with them. That was the best she could promise. Well, I told her, I would have to get out of that room if only for a few minutes, to get a breath of air. I would like to buy a bottle of Evian water, as I had had not a drop of anything to drink for more than twenty-four hours, and I had to get something to read. I would go stark, staring mad if I had to spend one more hour alone in that room with nothing to do but think and wait for the hours to pass.

Madame did not approve of the idea of my going out into the street, but, since it was pouring with rain, there were few people about, and she thought I might possibly get back without encountering any difficulty. The men who were sitting in the café downstairs, guzzling their wine and beer, looked at me and made coarse remarks as I passed them on my way through; I was the only woman in the place except for Madame Duval, behind the bar. But at least when I got back to my room, as I safely did, I had something to read and pure water to drink.

Toward nightfall, Madame Duval again came to say that she saw no hope of my getting into the free zone that day, no one had come

who could take me over. She guessed that I would have to spend another night there, she was sorry. She wasn't half as sorry as I was. The thought of spending even one more night in that odious place revolted me—but, to make matters worse, Madame Duval informed me that I would not be able to go back to Cholet the next morning, as the buses did not run on Sundays! I should have thought of that myself, for I knew that no automobile traffic was allowed on Sundays in that part of France; people could travel only by bicycle or train, or with horses. There were no trains from Vezelay to Cholet, I could not ride a bicycle, it was too far to walk—I was caught in that dreadful place, it seemed, with no way of getting out of there until Monday except on foot. Very well, then, I would go on foot. I would leave the next morning and walk along the main road in the direction of Cholet. I would find a clean hotel, or a farmhouse which would put me up for the night—or I would sleep in the fields. Anything would be preferable to a third night in this detestable place. I did not see how I could get through even this second one.

I ate more cold chicken and hard-boiled eggs and cake for lunch and dinner that day, Saturday, and drank the Evian water. I wrote in my diary, recording my bitter thoughts for posterity, read the magazines from cover to cover, reread Robert's letters. I felt very sorry for myself, especially when I reflected that no one in the world knew where I was, or how miserably I was feeling alone in this wretched room. Michel surely thought I had got into the free zone long before this—well, I would telephone him from the post office the next morning and tell him I was still in the occupied zone, ask him to meet the bus at Cholet Monday morning.

That night, I again slept on the floor in my clothes, and that night, being Saturday, was noisier than the preceding night. All the rooms on my floor seemed to be occupied, the men were drunker, the comings and goings were frequent. It was evident that Madame Duval had a lucrative business in her café. I lay there on the floor, trying to close my ears and my consciousness to the noise, the high, shrill laughter of the girls, the voices of the men.

Early Sunday morning, I went downstairs with a purposeful air and told Madame Duval that I was going to church. I went straight to the post office, which I had noticed the day before. One could telephone from here, since it was not a coastal district, and fortunately there was a woman in charge, not a German soldier as was frequently the case.

I soon had Michel on the wire. He was astonished when he heard my voice and asked me where I was telephoning from. I told him I was in the same place I had been since Friday, that Monsieur Dubois' friend had not been able to see me, he was away for a few days, so I would have to return to Cholet, as it was impossible for me to spend another night in the only hotel that was available to me. Hotel! If Michel could have known in what kind of place I really had spent the past two nights, he would have found some way to come and rescue me that day. As it was, he said he did not see how he could get me, it was too far to bring a horse, and I did not ride a bicycle. I was tired of hearing and of reminding myself of this inability, and told Michel not to mind, it was all right. I would find a place along the main road to spend that night, would pick up the bus the next morning, and arrive in Cholet about nine-thirty, where he agreed to meet me.

When I went back to the café, I felt better, knowing that I was to leave the place in an hour or so. I ate the last bit of chicken, the last egg, and the last crumb of cake. That was my fifth meal on that fare, and cold chicken has completely lost its allure for me. I had had nothing warm to eat, and only the Evian water to drink, and looked forward with eager anticipation to finding a hot lunch at an inn or a farmhouse somewhere along the road.

At about ten o'clock, as I was thinking of getting on my way, a knock came at the door. It was Madame Duval. "Would you like to leave now? I have found a man who can take you over at once." I stared at her, unbelieving. There must be a catch somewhere. But no, there was the man—Madame pointed to a farmer who was strolling nonchalantly past the café that I might get a good look at him. I must not take my blue bag with me, she told me, I must leave it with her, and I must not wear a hat or gloves. She would send those things to me by the man's son who also was in town. She instructed me to keep at least seventy-five yards behind Charles, as she called my guide, and try not to appear to be following him. He would be on a bicycle, he had another one with him for me, it was most unfortunate that I—I cut her short, being in no mood to go into that subject again. I told her I could match his pace, on foot, and would do everything she had instructed me to do, and agreed not to say where I had spent the past two nights if I should get caught. And I would not tell that I was being taken over the line. I would try to bluff, and insist that I was merely out for a Sunday morning stroll to admire the beauties of the countryside; I had no idea, I

would say, in which direction I had been going—oh, had I been going toward the line of demarcation? Whereupon I would turn and try to go back toward Vezelay, but Madame could not, of course, guarantee that I would succeed in these manoeuvres. I thanked her for her helpful suggestions and promised to protect her and Charles to the very last, then asked her how much I owed her. She let me off with a mere fifty dollars for my room and "service." She was in a position to charge anything she liked, so it was quite decent of her not to make it more than that. I was left with eight thousand francs, and hoped Charles would ask no more than that for his services.

It was with great enthusiasm that I said good-bye to Madame Duval.

There were crowds of people in town that day, since it was market day. There was the man, Charles, putting some provisions in the basket on his bicycle. I myself bought some tomatoes to make it appear as though I were marketing too, but also because I craved the tomato juice. When Charles got on his bicycle and rode slowly down the main street, I strolled after him, eating a tomato to give an air of casualness to the affair, but my heart was thumping.

At an important crossroads, Charles turned to the right. When I reached the point where he had turned I saw a sign, *A la ligne de demarcation*. Surely I would be stopped along this road; it must be perfectly obvious to everyone where I was going. But no one did stop me, the Germans gave me indifferent glances as I walked slowly along, munching the tomato, looking about me with what I trusted was a nature-loving air. Only by the greatest effort of will did I keep myself from breaking into a run and making a dash for it; every nerve was straining for action, and all I could do was saunter.

After a distance of two miles, Charles turned off the main road into a dirt road which did not seem to lead anywhere in particular. Would I be able to take this road without being challenged by one of these two Germans I saw coming toward me? Charles was up the road, engaged in animated conversation with a farmer who had been working in the field, so I leaned over to pick some wild flowers. Fortunately they *were* flowers; I would have picked them even if they had been poison ivy. The Germans went on toward town, Charles got on his bicycle and continued on his way without having given me a sign to go back, so I walked on after him.

When I came up to the man in the field, to whom Charles had been talking, he said *bonjour* to me; I answered him as airily as I could

through teeth which were chattering with excitement and nervousness. He leaned on his hoe and said, rapidly in a low voice, "Be very careful along here. They hide in the woods which skirt these fields. They have field glasses and police dogs. If you hear a shot, or a cry of *Halte!* stop immediately. If you stand quite still, the dogs will not harm you, and you will not be shot at. That first shot is only a warning, and is fired into the air. If you should start to run, or continue walking, they will fire again, and this time at you. Those dogs are trained to kill, and they can run faster than you can. If you are caught, do not say whom you were following, don't get any of us mixed up in this, will you?" I promised that I would not, but asked how I would know when I got to the line. He told me there was a barrier at the end of this road; guards were usually posted there, but they had left for lunch. They ought not to return before another half hour, I would have plenty of time if I went right along. Charles, he said, would be waiting for me in a field on the other side of the line, so from where we were, onwards, I would be alone until I got safely into the free zone.

There were no more turns in the road; it was one of the straightest and most exposed roads I had ever traveled on. No trees lined it as poplar trees so often line the French roads. There weren't even low bushes. There was only that road, and I was the only person on it, Charles by that time being well out of sight. I looked with nervous apprehension at the woods which skirted the fields some half mile distant on either side of the road, and wondered whether there were eyes in those woods, watching for just such sights as I was then providing, and whether those eyes would soon fall upon my lonely figure on that road. Well, I would soon know.

I listened for a shot, for a guttural *Halte*. Suddenly, as I came to the top of a little rise, there *was* a "*Halte!*"—but it was not shouted at me, it was printed on a barrier which marked the end of the road. There had originally been a bridge which crossed the fair-sized brook before me, but it had been taken down, leaving the barrier and the brook to mark the line of demarcation. Determined now to run for it if I should be challenged at this point, I turned into the field at my right, went down the embankment, bent low to take off my shoes and stockings, and waded, knee deep, across the clear, sparkling brook, scrambled up the opposite bank into a field of potatoes—and I was in the free zone. The immersion in that little stream seemed a fitting way to leave the occupied zone, and to cleanse myself after the dingy horridness of

Madame Duval's café. I put on my shoes and stockings, walked on a little farther and there, in a sheltered spot, sat Charles waiting for me from where he could not be seen from the other side of the brook. He grinned at me and asked me how I felt, whether I was all right. "Some women," he told me hopefully, "faint when they reach this point." But I did not faint, I was too happy to be free, out of the occupied zone, away from the Nazis and their domination.

The sun was shining, the birds were singing, the world looked beautiful. Everything seemed to be rejoicing at my escape. I asked Charles whether the Germans could take me now if they saw me standing there, and he said they could not, unless they had seen me in the act of crossing the line and could prove they did. He suggested that I sit down to rest, as we had another two miles to walk, but I preferred to get farther away from the line so we went on, Charles pushing his bicycle beside me until we reached his house.

He and his wife owned a farm which straddled the line. Some of his fields and his house were in the unoccupied zone; his barns and other fields were in the occupied. He had a permanent *Ausweis* and could pass freely from one side to the other; he was what was known as a *frontalier*, one who lives on the border. His wife received me hospitably, gave me some milk to drink and a slice of bread. I couldn't have eaten more, after the emotion of the past two or three hours, and was glad of an opportunity to rest and relax for a while before continuing on our way to Formerie, the nearest town from where I could get a bus to take me to Châteauroux. From the latter place I could get a train to the south of France, to Toulouse.

Charles and his wife were very proud of their farms and of their home. Some of the land they had acquired only recently, having bought it with the money Charles had earned conducting people across the line. I felt rather apprehensive as I heard this, and wondered whether my eight thousand francs would be enough to meet his price—and I had to save enough to pay for my train fare. They asked me where I lived, and when I told them, they looked at me in amazement. I wasn't the Countess de Vigny, was I? Yes, I was, but why? It seemed that their daughter worked in a village not far from Montigny and had written and spoken of us, of the American who had come to live at L'Ormeau. "Your husband is a prisoner, then, in Germany, isn't he?" Their daughter's husband was a prisoner, too, and it was partly because of that fact, and because of their hatred of the Germans—Charles had fought against

them in the last war—that they took people across the line, not just to make money. They proved this by refusing to accept any money at all from me for the service Charles had rendered me—and many people had paid as much as a thousand dollars to be taken into the free zone. They had paid that much and had not even reached their destinations, but were betrayed by the men to whom they had paid their money. The Germans had promised to double the amount anyone offered, if such persons were turned over to them, and this was a temptation too strong for some of the French peasants to resist.

I thanked Mr. and Mrs. Charles most sincerely, and told them that my husband and I would come to see them after the war was over, at which time he would thank them personally for what they had done for his wife. I asked them whether many people crossed the line at this point and they said yes, but it was becoming more and more dangerous. Only the day before, they told me, a woman had got caught with someone she was taking over, and she had been one of the most successful of the guides in that region. So the story Madame Duval had told me was true. The mayor, they said, did help many people to escape from the occupied zone, but he had been afraid of me. He had suspected me of being German, because of my accent, and thought I had been sent to catch him and the others in that town at getting people into the free zone. Madame Duval had been afraid, too, in the beginning, but she had become convinced that I was all I had said I was, happily for me.

My bag arrived some time later, and my hat and gloves. I felt rested enough to push on to Formerie, about ten miles away. It was a three-and-a-half-hour walk; Charles pushed his bicycle so he would have it to ride back. There was no spare room anywhere in Formerie; Charles tried vainly in the two hotels and various private houses to find lodging for me for that night. I was finally allowed by the woman who had been left in charge of the railroad station to spend the night in the tiny waiting room there. The station was not used now, as the trains no longer came to Formerie. I felt unbearably dirty, and had acquired a number of fleas in Madame Duval's café. But the station was respectable, I was in the free zone, and the next day I could take the train to Toulouse—so I reasoned, trying to comfort myself.

The next morning I had no breakfast—as I had had no dinner the night before, but, since the bus left Formerie at seven-thirty, I would be in Châteauroux by nine-thirty, where I could get a good breakfast. I arrived well before seven-thirty at the corner where Charles had told

me to go, and stood there, blue bag in hand, looking, I am sure, as disreputable as I felt. My clothes were rumpled, my face unwashed, eyes heavy from lack of sleep, and my hair only as tidy as a pocket comb and mirror could make it. I was thankful that Robert could not see me as I stood on that corner, waiting for the bus.

There it came. It stopped before me, and there were a few other people waiting to get on. I had one foot on the step of the bus when I felt a hand on my shoulder. "Your papers please, Madame." I looked around. Two French gendarmes stood waiting for my papers. Rather annoyed at the delay, I turned back, got my passport and identity card from my purse and handed them to the gendarmes. They looked carefully over the passport. "*Americaine?*" "*Oui, Messieurs.*" The identity card—"You come from the occupied zone?" "*Oui, Messieurs.*" "Sorry, Madame, but you will have to come with us." "You mean that I cannot take this bus?" They were afraid that was just what they did mean. So away drove the bus, leaving me standing there in that miserable little town of Formerie, between two French gendarmes.

XV

That seemed to me to be the last straw. After all I had gone through to get into this free zone, then to find myself under arrest by the very French to whom I had come for protection and safety! I was taken to the Gendarmerie and there spent five hours. Had I kept an iron grip on my nerves and behaved differently, I probably would have been released in half that time. But I am not an iron woman and I was, at that time, tired to the point of exhaustion, I was famished, and I was outraged at what I considered to be the injustice and stupidity of the French policemen. I behaved very badly, crying hysterically, half in anger, half from sheer fatigue and tired nerves. I was incapable of holding myself in to a display of righteous indignation which the situation surely did warrant. In any case, I had nothing to lose except time, by going in for a few histrionics, and time was something I had plenty of right then. The bus had gone, there would not be another for forty-eight hours, as the buses ran only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. So I cried and sobbed, and ranted and raved, and felt much better afterward. I was then able to answer, fairly calmly, the myriads of questions being hurled at me by three or four gendarmes who wrote

down all my replies. They would need a bit of editing, I imagine, before going into the permanent records of that little country police station. They asked every question they could think of: About my home in France, and my home in America; about my family-in-law and my relatives in the United States. They thought it highly suspicious that I should have none, for every Frenchman seems to be blessed (or the reverse) with droves of aunts and cousins, for one of whom they seem always to be in mourning. What about my husband, and my child? Which regiment had my husband been in, where had he been mobilized, where had he been taken prisoner, and so on. How much money had we, how much had I with me? I found out afterward that it was my accent which had again got me into trouble; they were convinced that I was a spy on some mission which might bring harm to the new French State.

I realized that, unless I wanted to spend another night in the railroad station of that little town, which I certainly did not wish to do, I would have to use my wits to find a way to get out of Formerie that day. So, after I had answered all the questions to everyone's apparent satisfaction, I told them, pleasantly, "You know, gentlemen, it is entirely your fault that I have missed this bus. I can't possibly spend two days here waiting for the next one. My baby, as I told you, is in Toulouse waiting for me. I have been separated from her too long already, and I have been completely out of touch with my family for four or five days. If the baby should be ill, no one would know where to find me and that does worry me dreadfully." I knew that this was a plea likely to soften the heart of a Frenchman, and it was true that I was anxious about Rose-Hélène. I did want to get to Toulouse as quickly as possible, from where I could communicate with my mother-in-law and ask her to bring Rose-Hélène to me.

I suggested to the gendarmes that they commandeer a car of some kind to take me the forty miles to Châteauroux, for which trip I would, of course, pay a fair price. It took a bit of persuasion but they finally did agree to it, and a car was obtained for me at about one o'clock.

When we arrived at Châteauroux, I asked to be set down in front of the Gendarmerie. I paid the driver twenty-five dollars, and went in to get my *sauf conduit*. There I was treated with the greatest courtesy; the officials were unusually intelligent and helpful. I was interested to read, some time later, in *Les Murs Sont Bons* by Henry Bordeaux, that he also had been impressed by these same officials in dealings he had

had with them at a time of great stress for everyone—during the fall of France.

While I was talking with one of these men, who was filling out a form as he questioned me, my eye fell upon some papers on his desk and among them, looking straight at me, was Monica's picture! I looked calmly at it for some seconds, finding it perfectly natural that Monica's photograph should be here on this desk, in the free zone, when the last I had seen or heard of Monica herself, she was in Paris. Then my reflexes began to function; I gasped, the man looked up at me and I pointed to the picture which was pinned to an application form such as was then being filled out for me. "Is that woman here in Châteauroux now?" I demanded excitedly. "Why yes, she came in this morning, having come from the occupied zone, and she has asked for a safe conduct to go to Monte Carlo. She is coming back this afternoon at four o'clock to get her papers." He did not know where she could be found meanwhile, but she surely would be in his office at four o'clock.

I had not been as clever as Monica had apparently been, for I had no passport photographs with me, and I had to hunt up a place to have some taken. There was only one place in that big city, the official told me, where photographs could be taken on short notice, and developed and printed while you waited—and that place, naturally, was on the outskirts of town, a couple of miles away. I told the officer I would try to be back by four, but that if I were detained, I would like Mrs. Maitland to wait. Could he please tell her that her friend from Paris was in town and that she would be back as soon as possible? This he promised to do, smiling at my breathless excitement.

I galloped through that town, up hills and down, and arrived at the photographer's in record time, hot and panting. It was a dreadfully warm day and I hadn't had even so much as a glass of water to drink all day, and nothing at all to eat. It always amazes me to discover how much punishment one's body can and will endure. The pictures were taken, developed and printed by a nice little man who did his best to make them resemble something human, but I never have shown those photographs to anyone but the officials. By a heroic effort on my part and that of the little photographer, I got back to the Gendarmerie at four-thirty, and there was Monica waiting for me, with a proud and pleased officer, happy that he had been instrumental in bringing us together.

Monica and I fell into each other's arms, half laughing, half crying,

each firing questions at the other and getting nowhere for the first five minutes. When we had calmed down a bit, we decided we had better get our papers and then go somewhere quietly to talk, which we did, not forgetting to thank our nice official who seemed so pleased to have been of service to an Englishwoman and an American.

Monica and I were taking the same train; we each had to go to Toulouse, Monica to change there for Marseille and Monte Carlo. The train did not leave until 1 A.M., so we would have plenty of time to talk. And to eat. We had dinner in the best restaurant in Châteauroux, it being the first real meal I had had since Friday noon—only three days, actually, but it seemed much longer than that. Monica told me that she had been at the station in Cholet that Friday; I have no idea how we missed each other and it was most unfortunate for me that we did, for I could have crossed with her and Madame Dubois, after all. They had had quite an easy time getting across, and were not arrested upon arriving in the free zone as I had been. They had spent Friday night in Cholet, Saturday night at the farmhouse where lived the young girl who had conducted them as far as the line, and Sunday night in a fairly comfortable hotel in a rather large town in the free zone. That had brought Monica to Châteauroux the same day I arrived there, each of us with quite a different set of experiences.

We spent that night sitting up in a first class compartment in the train, sharing it with six other people. That was my fourth night of sleeping in my clothes. We arrived at Toulouse at six o'clock that morning. Monica left for Monte Carlo and found that her husband had been sent back to England on one of the boats which evacuated English people from the Riviera at the time of the fall of France. He had survived that trip and lived long enough for Monica to have a few months with him in England before he died, early in 1942. Monica stayed in Monte Carlo long enough to rest and to get her papers in order for her return to London, via Madrid and Lisbon, then took that long journey and arrived safely home. She had got all the way back to London from a concentration camp in eastern France, no easy feat for a frail little woman, but her moral courage had supplied what she lacked in physical strength.

I went straight to the best hotel in Toulouse, engaged the best room they could give me—a room WITH bath, and put myself into the bathtub as quickly as I could peel off my filthy clothes. I took two or three baths, one would not have sufficed, and washed my hair. My night

clothes were clean, I had not used them since I had left Michel's—was it only four nights before? It did seem to be at least twice that long. I had some hot soup and toast brought to my room, then fell into a profound sleep from which I did not wake until nearly noon the next day.

I was so tired I could not get out of bed that day, so I telephoned tante Odile and asked her if she could come to see me. She was surprised to hear that I had arrived, wanted to know why I had not come straight to her, but I told her I would explain when I saw her. I just could not have let Robert's aunt see me for the first time as I was when I arrived in Toulouse. My trunks, she said, had not arrived, but Martine, her daughter, could lend me some of her clothes. They came to see me that afternoon, and I liked them at once. Tante Odile was much less reserved than her sister, Robert's mother, and Martine, who was about my own age, was quite jolly. When they left, after a short and pleasant visit, they took my clothes with them, to be sent to the cleaner's.

The next day I left the hotel and went to the Villa Senlas, and spent the next three weeks there, waiting for my various visas, for my trunks to arrive—which they did, and intact, some days later—and for Rose-Hélène to arrive from Les Chênes. I was glad to be out of the occupied zone, but was also glad that I was going on to Morocco and not remaining in the so-called free zone, which was anything but free.

One thing I could do in the free zone, however, was write letters to the United States, after more than a year of not having been able to do so. I spent the days while waiting for Rose-Hélène to arrive, writing to all my friends in America, and hoped I soon would have news from them.

XVI

It took a long time to arrange the details of Rose-Hélène's journey from Les Chênes to Toulouse, for it all had to be done by postcards which took six days, each way, to go and come. Children under six years of age were permitted, at that time, to cross the line of demarcation without an *Ausweis*. Since then, a rule has been made that all children and babies must be included on the *Ausweis* of the person taking them from one zone to the other. All that had to be done in August 1941, however, was for someone to take Rose-Hélène to Mont-de-Marsan, on

the occupied side of the line, and for someone to go from Toulouse to that point on the unoccupied side, to get her. It was finally arranged that my mother-in-law should take Rose-Hélène to Mont-de-Marsan, and that tante Odile would go from Toulouse to get the baby. I myself could not go, as I was a foreigner, and foreigners were not permitted, by the French, to approach any border, coastal area, or frontier (even that of occupied France) nearer than by eighteen miles. I was not allowed, even, to fetch my three-and-a-half-year-old baby who could not travel that distance alone and who, I feared, might not want to leave her grandmother for someone she had never seen. I argued and pleaded, but to no avail. When a French functionary says No, it is No to the end of time. He can never be prevailed upon to change his mind. So tante Odile and Martine took a bus early one morning and returned at eight o'clock that night with Rose-Hélène whom I had not seen since my brief visit to Les Chênes in June. I wondered, as I held her in my arms, as she quivered with joy at being with Mama once more, how I had been able to endure being separated from her for so long a time, and resolved that we should not be separated again for any reason, not, at any rate, for a space of time which could be measured by months.

Tante Odile returned from her day's trip in tears, white and shaken by her experience. She and Martine had arrived at Mont-de-Marsan toward noon, before the bus had arrived on the other side of the line. The line in that region was not in the town itself, but in the open country on the Bordeaux-Toulouse road, on the Toulouse side of the town. My mother-in-law, therefore, had to go through Mont-de-Marsan, and my aunt was not allowed to enter it. She and Martine had taken their lunches with them, and they sat down along the roadside to eat their sandwiches and to watch for the bus from the occupied zone.

It arrived about an hour later, and from it stepped my mother-in-law, with a small girl tante Odile and Martine knew must be Rose-Hélène. The baby was cheerful and smiling, as usual, and ready for whatever was expected of her. There was a distance of some seventy-five feet between the two barriers, a no man's land which Rose-Hélène would have to traverse alone. She was told that she must go over to those two ladies who would take her to Maman, so she kissed her grandmother good-bye, my mother-in-law crying and holding the baby tightly in her arms, not wanting to let her go, not knowing when she would see her little granddaughter again.

The German guards let Rose-Hélène pass under the barrier (she was

so tiny there was no need of raising it for her), after they had examined her suitcase, which was then taken by one bus driver to the other one on the free side, and after they had examined the small purse Rose-Hélène proudly carried. It happened to be filled with toilet paper which had been put there for the journey and this the Germans examined with minute care, hoping to find something written on one of the sheets—Rose-Hélène watching them with great interest. When they found that the paper was no more than it appeared to be, the purse was restored to the baby, who waved good-bye to her grandmother, the soldiers and the nice dogs, and trotted off into the no man's land alone.

She was happy to meet her aunts and excited at the idea of being taken to Maman, but tante Odile was staring unhappily across that no man's land at her sister whom she had not seen since early 1940, since before the débâcle in France. There they were, only seventy-five feet from each other, and they were not allowed to approach or kiss one another, nor even touch the other's hand. The barrier on my mother-in-law's side was guarded by German soldiers with their police dogs, on tante Odile's side by French soldiers, and on neither side would the guards allow the two sisters to do more than look mutely at each other across the barriers. "In our own country, in our own France," tante Odile kept repeating tearfully to me, "I was not allowed to talk to my sister, my only sister, who stood only a few feet away from me." It was a great shock to her, from which she did not recover for days. She had, at last, tasted the bitterness of France's defeat, and had at last realized the depth of her country's humiliation. Many people's understanding of a condition or realization of an event is only so profound as it touches them personally, and my tante Odile was not alone in her egocentric attitude. But she was shocked out of hers that August day when the realization of her country's defeat came to her more than one year after it had happened.

By early September, I had obtained my Portuguese visa as well as the Spanish visa, and the dollars necessary to get Rose-Hélène and me as far as Morocco. We said good-bye to our aunt and cousin, and on Friday, September 5th, we left, by an early morning train, arriving in Lisbon on Sunday night. We had very little to eat during that three-day journey, as there were no dining cars attached to the Spanish trains. Since the Spanish people did not have enough food for themselves, they could not feed travelers passing through their country. We took what we could find in Toulouse for box lunches, and some powdered milk

which was given Rose-Hélène by the Red Cross there. I bought bottles of Evian water to mix with the milk, for there was no water on the Spanish trains, not even for washing one's hands. We arrived in Madrid at noon Saturday, spent the day there, and left at ten o'clock that night for Lisbon. We were supposed to reach the Portuguese border toward noon on Sunday, so that morning I threw what was left of our provisions out of the window to the Spanish people, men, women and children, who lined the tracks, begging for food. We were hungry, but they were starving, and I could not resist the pleading look in their dark eyes. They fell upon the food and wolfed it down, even that which had fallen into the mud—it was something to eat, something which might appease for a short while at least, the pangs of hunger which they had suffered for so many years.

I must admit that I would have saved a little something for Rose-Hélène if I had realized that the train was very late and that we would not reach the border until after four o'clock and so would have nothing to eat until 5 P.M. However, we forgot how famished we had been when we sat down to what seemed to us the most sumptuous meal we had ever eaten. The dining car was like something out of the Arabian Nights to those of us who thus had the first glimpse in months, or more than a year, of sparkling cleanliness and plenty. The Portuguese have recognized the psychological value of having those dining cars as attractive as possible, of serving the best possible meals to travelers who are arriving from countries at war, or enemy occupied countries. The napery is dazzlingly white, and stiffly starched, the bread is whiter than anyone arriving from those countries could remember bread ever having been. There is real butter on the table, lots of it. You are simply overwhelmed by the quantity of food served at that first meal in Portugal, and by the quality of it. Everything is faultlessly prepared, spotlessly clean; the waiters, porters, officials, everyone is scrupulously polite, friendly and honest. There were smiling faces everywhere that day, and everyone looked contented and happy. It was hard for us to accept so quickly the transition from what had been a horrible nightmare to what seemed a beautiful dream; poor France had been the nightmare, happy, prosperous, peaceful Portugal was the dream. I learned afterward that there is window dressing in Portugal, as in every country, and that if you can look behind the scenes there, you will find misery and poverty and filth and disease, in spite of all that Salazar has done to improve the conditions in his country since he has come into power. But that first

glimpse of Portugal is like a glimpse of paradise to anyone coming out of war-torn Europe.

XVII

We remained in Portugal five weeks, although I had expected to stay only a few days. I had the American visa for Morocco, but I needed a permit from the French Resident General at Rabat to come there. I had a letter to Monsieur François Gentil, then Minister from France to Portugal. I was glad to have the opportunity of meeting Monsieur Gentil, and the pleasure of knowing him, quite apart from the fact that, had it not been for his help, Rose-Hélène and I probably would never have been able to go to Morocco.

First of all, my application for a Moroccan visa was sent to the Residence at Rabat—and returned, refused. Then Monsieur Gentil sent to General Noguès a letter of introduction which had been given to me by a cousin of Robert's who knew the General well. With this letter, Monsieur Gentil sent his personal request that my application be favorably considered by General Noguès. After some delay, the reply came: Rose-Hélène and I could come for fifteen days! That, of course, was tantamount to a refusal. However, after giving the matter some deep thought, I decided not to regard it in that light. I had planned to go to Morocco, and that is where we would go.

By that time, there was another snag. Just two days before the Residence in Rabat reached its decision, the six months' validation of my passport expired, and the Consulate in Lisbon refused to revalidate it without authorization from Washington. I thought this very hard luck, since I could have gone, on my American passport, had the visa come from Rabat any time up until two days before. It was only a few yards of red tape which stood between Morocco and us now; if it had been all right with the American Government for us to go two days ago, it ought to be all right then, nothing having happened meanwhile to alter the status of affairs between the United States and French Morocco. So far as the spirit of the law was concerned it surely was all right for us to go. So I reasoned with myself, and so I reasoned with my friends in the American Consulate, the same ones to whom I had said good-bye in Paris a couple of months before. I convinced myself, but my logic made no impression upon them.

Then I went into a huddle with myself and came out of it with an idea. I went again to see Monsieur Gentil. "Is a child three-and-a-half year old entitled to a French passport, if that child is a French citizen?" I asked him. He did not at once see my point. "Yes, I believe so, if it can be proven that the child is a French citizen." He thought it would be best to consult the French Consul about this, who knew more about such matters than he, and Monsieur the Consul, duly consulted, said that a child of three-and-a-half was legally entitled to a passport, although such requests were rarely made. "Would this be sufficient proof of citizenship to secure a passport?" and I showed the Consul my *livret de famille* which had been issued by the City of Paris, giving the facts about our marriage and Rose-Hélène's birth. Yes, it would be. "Then," I said triumphantly, "my daughter, Rose-Hélène de Vigny, aged three and a half, does want a passport, because she wants very much to go to French Morocco, for which journey she already has been granted a visa by Rabat. I believe that Monsieur le Ministre has the papers—" (Monsieur le Ministre nodded confirmation of this). "Of course, Mademoiselle cannot travel alone, so she requests her passport to read that she is accompanied by her mother." And so it was arranged and Rose-Hélène, at the age of three and a half became a real traveler, with her own passport, and we went together to Morocco, I merely as "*sa mère*" who was accompanying the young lady.

The Spanish authorities were extremely reluctant to grant visas for Tangiers; sometimes even diplomats had to wait two months for these. I managed to secure mine in ten days, I don't quite know how, except that I appealed to everyone of influence I knew in Lisbon, and one of those persons did happen to have enough influence to get me the transit visa necessary for our trip to French Morocco via Tangiers. The day I went to the Spanish Consulate to have the precious visa stamped on my passport (it was put, strangely enough, on my expired American passport, but no one ever seemed to mind that), I had to go to the consulates of five different countries. To the Spanish, for the visa; to the English, for a navicert for our trunks which were being sent by boat to Casablanca; to the French to complete the passport formalities for Rose-Hélène; to the American, to say good-bye to my friends there, and to tell them what I had done; and to the Portuguese, to get our exit permit. It was like a Mad Hatter's tea party. I saw, all in the space of a few hours, posters which read: "Vive Franco, Vive Spain"; "Vive Salazar and Portugal"; "Vive le Maréchal, Vive la France"; and the pictures of

Churchill and of Roosevelt. I was so confused at the end of that day, I hardly knew what country I was in or what language I ought to speak.

All the formalities were at last completed, and the various countries (except my own) satisfied that we had the right to leave Lisbon to go to Morocco. We were the only non-diplomats on the plane which left from Cintra, thirty miles from Lisbon, that Monday morning in October. The flight was a beautiful one, along the Portuguese and Spanish coasts to Cadiz, the latter a dazzling white city on a peninsula, a long arm straggling into the Straits of Gibraltar. We flew across the Straits and came down at the Tangiers airport toward one o'clock that afternoon.

We were enchanted with our first view of Africa. I was as thrilled as Rose-Hélène to see the indigenes, men as well as women, swathed in flowing robes, the women with delicately colored veils covering their faces, their lambent eyes glowing like dark jewels. We were rather uncomfortable in that Oriental atmosphere, coming as we did so recently from Europe. We had come by one of the most modern inventions to one of the oldest civilizations, and had come so quickly we had had no time to adjust ourselves mentally to the change. We walked a little through the streets of Tangiers, itself a white city hung on a hillside, with the blue Mediterranean below, a blue, blue sky overhead. The streets were narrow and tortuous, we passed the bazaars and markets, or souks, about which I had often read. It was a vivid city, Tangiers, teeming with life and color, and, international center that it was, full of intrigue and espionage. There, just opposite, was Gibraltar and there, to the right, the Mediterranean. I wondered, as I looked at that smooth, blue surface, how many enemy submarines were lurking there, and I wondered where the battleships and cruisers were that were watching and ready for action.

We took a room for the day at the colorful and ruinously expensive Hotel Minzah, and I put Rose-Hélène to bed after lunch, as usual, for her afternoon nap. The bed was draped in mosquito netting, a tent as Rose-Hélène called it, and, in spite of the strangeness of our surroundings, she lay peacefully in her bed and let me go out to buy our tickets for Rabat and do other errands. What a good little traveler she was! And how thrilled I was to think, as we lay, she in the lower berth and I in the upper of our compartment **on the train that night, that the next morning we would wake in Rabat.**

To Morocco and Return

I

WE arrived at Rabat at five o'clock Tuesday morning, October 14th. Rose-Hélène told me, as I dressed her, that she had fallen out of bed during the night, and had picked herself up and climbed back into the lower berth without bothering me. Experienced travelers with passports do not whimper about little things like falling out of bed on a train in the middle of the night, even if they are only three-and-a-half years old.

It was still dark when we got off the train; there was, of course, no one to meet us. I had been told in Lisbon that the Hotel Balima was the place to stay in Rabat. I hoped, as we walked up the stairs leading from the train platform to the station, that the hotel would not be too far from the station, and that I would find someone to carry our bags, for there was no taxi or fiacre available at that hour. In fact, the station was deserted except for a few natives lying asleep on the floor, and a few others wandering about looking remote and mysterious, and paying no attention to these two Christians who stood gazing helplessly around. I had two suitcases and the blue canvas bag to carry, and wanted to keep tight hold of Rose-Hélène's hand, as much for the warm comfort the feel of it gave me, as to protect her.

The moon and stars were still shining, the palm trees were outlined dimly against the sky, their fronds swaying gracefully in a light breeze. How romantic and thrilling it would all have been had Robert been with us, but alone, Rose-Hélène and I found it a little too exciting to be altogether pleasant. An Arab boy strolled past, looking at us with mild interest. I pointed to my bags, asked him whether he could go with us to the Hotel Balima and carry these suitcases there. He bent over, silently picked up the bags and walked off in what I fervently

hoped was the direction of the hotel. I hoped, too, for Rose-Hélène's sake, who trotted patiently at my side, that we would not have too far to walk. The streets were empty, dark and silent, except for the echo of our footsteps and the faint rustle of the palm trees. The hotel, fortunately, was not far. There I routed the night porter out of his cubby-hole and asked him to pay the boy and to show us to our room, which I had reserved from Lisbon. Rose-Hélène and I climbed thankfully into our beds, I breathing a sigh of relief that we had at last reached our destination.

That afternoon, we went to the *Sécurité*, the police of French Morocco. It is this bureau, ordinarily, which decides who can go to French Morocco and how long they can stay there. I intended to try to get an extension of my fifteen-day visa through those normal channels, but if I failed there, I would go to the Residence and ask to see General Noguès, since it was he who had granted, and the *Sécurité* which had refused, my application to come to Morocco. I saw M. Cordier, Assistant Chef de la *Sécurité*. Rose-Hélène started things off well by looking very French and beguiling, by making a curtsy as she gave her hand and said, "Bonjour, Monsieur." I explained that we had been most grateful for the permission to come to Morocco, and I now hoped that we would be allowed to stay there at least until my husband's release, in which event I would return to France, unless my husband could get to Morocco to join us. Rose-Hélène at this point thought, in whispered advice, that it might be wise to show the nice man her passport; this I did and Monsieur seemed properly and gratifyingly impressed by the document. At the end of the interview, he granted us permission to stay three months in French Morocco, with the promise that the permit would be renewed if Robert had not been released by the end of that period.

Having secured this *permis de séjour*, there was no further reason for us to remain in Rabat. I had been told that Marrakech would be the best place for us to spend the winter because of the climate there, which was hot and dry. Casablanca had unpleasant fogs, and Rabat was not as warm as Marrakech. The Hotel Mamounia at Marrakech had been recommended as being the best in all Morocco or even in North Africa, and it was there that I decided to stay until I could find a small villa where I hoped to settle down to a quasi-family life. I have never liked living in hotels, and I felt that Rose-Hélène was entitled to and needed as much of a home as I could provide for her. I had up-

rooted her from L'Ormeau where she could have remained in perfect comfort and security had it not been for me, her American mother. I owed it to her to give her the best I could, to make up to her for what I had taken from her.

She missed dreadfully the doll carriage I had given her for Christmas just before we left L'Ormeau for Paris, and also the doll Po-paule which she had not been allowed to bring with her. I had told her that only one doll could go with us on our long journey, so a new doll, Claudine, had been selected because she had beautiful blue eyes, fringed with long lashes, eyes which closed when Claudine was put to bed, and she cried Mama in a plaintive voice which awoke the maternal instincts in Rose-Hélène's heart. She regretted, later, having been carried away by the wistful note in Claudine's voice, for Claudine developed some mysterious disease which stilled her voice forever, and the beautiful blue eyes fell out—or in—lashes and all, leaving Claudine but a mockery of her former self. Rose-Hélène had learned, the hard way, that one must not be carried away by superficial attractions. Po-paule was the one who should have come with us, Po-paule whose painted eyes looked steadily at one and did not flutter under lowered lashes, Po-paule who never raised her voice in protest against anything; but, alas, she was far away at L'Ormeau.

Claudine had had her merits in the beginning, however. She had traversed the no man's land going to Toulouse in the arms of her mother, and she had behaved well during the three-day train trip to Lisbon, and the plane and train journey to Morocco. But, upon our arrival at Marrakech, Claudine missed her sister, Po-paule, and needed her carriage because she was tired. It taxed Rose-Hélène's powers of imagination, and her patience, to explain to Claudine why these deprivations had to be accepted, and, as I listened to the long hours of conversation between my baby and her doll, I determined to provide them both with something more home-like than a hotel room if I possibly could.

A governess seemed to be indicated, too, for nothing was being done about Rose-Hélène's academic education. She was learning other things, which would be useful to her later in life, and she could still read her letters, could count to ten in French and in English, and could read figures. But that was the extent of her three-and-a-half-year-old book knowledge. Her curiosity, as ever, was insatiable, and her little mind hungered for details about everything she saw and heard. My own

brain staggered under the weight of all it had to carry. I was Mama, Papa, banker, travel agent, nurse—as well as a tired woman who felt the need of rest and relaxation occasionally. I looked forward to the comparative peace and tranquillity of a small home of our own where we could quietly await Papa's return.

But the housing situation in French Morocco was acute. There were three times the number of people living there than had lived there before the war, and for whom accommodations had originally been provided. The hotels and apartment houses were crowded to capacity, every villa was occupied, and there were long waiting lists of people who needed houses or apartments, in every town and city in Morocco. Officers' wives and their children had no place to live; in Marrakech the situation became so desperate, the local authorities turned about one hundred girls out of the rude houses in which they had been living, near one of the army camps, and gave those quarters to the officers and their families. I soon realized that there was no hope for me to find anything, as priorities were given to large families, and we were only two, so the Mamounia Hotel became our home for the nine months we spent in French Morocco.

II

It was an excellent hotel, situated on the outskirts of the Medina, or native quarter, and about a mile and three quarters from the Guelize, or European town. The Koutoubia, the most beautiful monument of Marrakech, a Twelfth Century mosque of the Scribes about 240 feet high, was very near, and could be seen from the terraces of the hotel. The scene was as colorful as could be found anywhere in the world. Moslems of the mountain tribes could be seen there, they having come down on their camels which had been quartered at a picturesque caravansary a short distance from the *Place*. Every afternoon at six o'clock, the *Place* was a riot of color and animation; there the indigenes would gather to watch the snake charmers, the boy dancers, and other attractions, and to listen to the story tellers. The story teller would squat in the dust in the slanting rays of the afternoon sun, and spin tales for the entranced audience which sat or stood around him, in a wide circle. There were modern stores in the Guelize, and a cinema, the streets were broad, and paved, and everything was completely modern. But even the

Europeans preferred to do their shopping in the souks, for there was a wider variety from which to choose, things were apt to be cheaper, and it was a picturesque spot in which to shop, if one could shut one's eyes to the flies, and the dirt and filth which was everywhere.

Marrakech nestled among the foothills of the Atlas Mountains. The rooms on the side of the Hotel Mamounia which faced the mountains had their own terraces as large as small rooms, and private baths. We had such a room which overlooked, as well, the orange grove that covered two or three acres. The view from our terrace was a gorgeous one. In the foreground, the vivid color of the oranges, lemons and grapefruit blended with the green of the citrus fruit trees and the olive trees which also grew in the grove; in the background, there were the white peaks of the Atlas Mountains against the blue, blue sky. There was never any sound but that of the birds which warbled and trilled from early morning until late evening, their little throats nearly bursting with song.

Dinners were served in the garden of the hotel until late November, it being too hot to eat luncheon outside. The sun shone in Marrakech eight days out of ten—Morocco has been referred to as a cold country with a hot sun, and that did describe our Marrakech winter. During January, the coldest month, the extremes of temperature were very trying. One day, for instance, the thermometer registered 27° in the morning, and 110° in the sun in the afternoon; 83° difference in temperature within a few hours. The climate of Morocco is moribific; the germs flourish in that hot sun. There was a small-pox epidemic when Rose-Hélène and I first arrived in Marrakech and we both had to be vaccinated; then, a short time after, Rose-Hélène was inoculated against typhoid fever—I had already had that malady. Later, we both were inoculated against typhus. The lice which cause that disease could be seen everywhere, crawling on the tops of the fiacres in which one would ride to town, or on the Arabs as they sat beside you in the trains, or sunning themselves in the dust. These inoculations and vaccinations kept both of us feeling miserable for the first month or so of our stay in Morocco, but they were precautions which had to be taken.

Ten or twelve officers of the German Armistice Commission were comfortably installed in the Mamounia Hotel, with their secretaries and chauffeurs. They had requisitioned the best rooms of the hotel, of course. Their quarters were on the same floor and on the same side of the hotel as our room, about four or five rooms farther away from

the kitchens than ours. They had installed radios in their apartments, powerful receiving and transmitting sets which often interfered with the reception of the other radios in the hotel, including the small set I had bought for my room.

The German officers sat at a large table in a corner by the garden window of the main dining room; their secretaries and chauffeurs had their table at the foot of the steps which led down into the dining room from the main hall, and on the same side of the room as the officers. Our table was by a window on the opposite side of the large room, within the range of vision of those watchful German eyes, but at least out of earshot. The Germans usually dressed in civilian clothes, the officers in neat, trig tropical suits, but they occasionally appeared in uniform, white in summer, the familiar gray-green in winter.

Rose-Hélène awoke quite suddenly one day to the fact that most of the other children she saw had their Papas somewhere about, and she wanted a definite and precise explanation as to why hers was always away. I had never talked very much to her about the war, not liking to arouse in her baby mind the fear, hatred and prejudice a knowledge of that question evokes. Still, I could not allow our little daughter to feel rejected by her father. So I explained that Papa had had to be a soldier and go away to fight some other soldiers who were not nice, and who wanted to take L'Ormeau away from us; those men had caught Papa and would not let him come home to us. She asked what kind of soldiers they were, and I told her they were called Germans. A few days later, we passed before General Martin's headquarters and there were, as usual, two Senegalese guards posted at the entrance. Their uniforms were different from any she had seen, she stared at them and demanded, "Are those the soldiers who are keeping Papa?" She asked the same questions when she saw French officers in uniform a day or so after that. No, those were all French, like Papa.

The following day, the German officers strode into the dining room, wearing their uniforms, for the first time since we had been there. The sight of that familiar gray-green rang a bell in Rose-Hélène's mind. She turned to me after having watched the progress of the Germans the full length of the room to their table. "Oh, *those* are Germans." I nodded confirmation. She looked over at them, seated now, and studied them with great interest. "*Ils sont méchants,*" she announced, finally, and turned her attention to her tomato juice. Now that her curiosity had been satisfied, I hoped that the matter would be forgotten.

A day or so later, I was having tea in the garden of the hotel with a friend to whom I had brought a letter of introduction. Rose-Hélène was playing near us, sailing a little boat in the pool. One of the German officers passed us, in civilian clothes, to take a stroll in the garden. I did not worry when Rose-Hélène disappeared from sight, for there was a high wall around the hotel property and no harm could come to her there. That night, I heard her prayers, as usual, and, as usual, she began by saying, "Dear Jesus, please send my Papa home to Mama and me—" Tonight she stopped at that point. "Oh, Mama, I asked the German soldier today why he was keeping my Papa." Trying to hide my dismay, I enquired casually, "You did, darling? Where did you see him, and what did he say?" Then she related how she had seen him go past, in the garden. She had run after him calling, "Monsieur, Monsieur," to attract his attention. He had stopped and asked her what she wanted, whereupon she had put her question—why was he preventing her Papa from coming home to her? "What did he say, *chérie*?" "Oh, he said, 'He will come back soon, *ma petite*,' and then I said, 'That's good, because I want to see my Papa, and Mama does too.'" I told her she must not talk to those soldiers again, for the French people did not speak to the Germans, and Papa would not like her to do so. And she never did, but the Germans, of course, then knew all about us—if they had not known before—and watched us with great interest, hostile regards for me, indulgent ones for the little girl.

A week or so after we arrived at the Mamounia, I noticed an American car before the entrance of the hotel; CD license plates were on the car, and bags marked K. Pendar were being taken into the hotel. I had heard of a Kenneth Pendar who was a Vice-Consul at Casablanca, and I knew several people in America and in Morocco who knew him very well. There began a pleasant acquaintance which ripened into a genuine friendship. I saw Ken oftener than I saw any other American in Morocco, because his work brought him often to Marrakech, and we were the only Americans in that part of the country. He had been loaned a large villa which belonged to an American who was then in the United States, and who would not be returning to Morocco until after the war.

Lavish entertainment was given at what inevitably became known as the Villa Pendar. Ken ordered quantities of food from America, and always had a plentiful supply of American cigarettes. This alone would have been sufficient to make him popular and his invitations

eagerly accepted, for Morocco was, by that time, beginning to feel the pinch of restrictions and the French people there did not accept them with the stoicism of the French in the Metropolitan area. But, in addition to all he had to offer by way of hospitality, Ken had much charm, he liked everybody, knew everyone, and was well liked and admired by nearly everyone. He was so popular, the Germans called him the most dangerous man in Morocco, which appellation pleased and amused Ken enormously.

Rose-Hélène and I went very often to the Villa. It was a pleasure to me to have someone with whom I could talk frankly and freely about the war, and with whom I could exchange ideas concerning the war aims and the post-war problems of the world. Ken was a man of deep patriotism and burning ideals; he was so earnest, so sincere in his efforts and desire to serve his country to the very limit of his power and ability, the few mistakes he made were forgiven and understood. Rose-Hélène became very fond of Ken and enjoyed playing about the garden, and being spoiled by our new friend. It was good to get away from the hotel occasionally, away from the watchful eyes of the Germans, and the gossip atmosphere which, inevitably, pervaded the place.

There were nearly always interesting and congenial people visiting Ken or having lunch there. Some of these became Rose-Hélène's and my friends, and in this, as well as in many other ways, Ken was responsible for making our stay in Morocco more agreeable than it might otherwise have been. I also met several people at the Mamounia whose friendship I now treasure highly. In spite of my being an American, the French accepted me as one of them because of Robert, whom some of them knew, and because of Rose-Hélène who looked so very French, and whose merry good nature attracted everyone's attention. I played bridge nearly every evening in the great hall with the various guests of the hotel, and this was almost my sole recreation. I went out in the evening no more than five times during our nine months' stay there so, although I did know a great many people, my life was, on the whole, a quiet one.

III

One day, I gave a luncheon at the hotel. I invited an army officer and his wife, the prosecutor of the tribunal of Marrakech, three other

French people, and Kenneth Pendar. The morning of the day of the luncheon, the officer telephoned me to say that he had heard that I had invited Ken to the luncheon. I told him that this was true, to which he replied that Ken could not come to that lunch, since it was being given at the hotel under the eyes of the Germans who would make a note of every one of my guests. A protest would be made to the Armistice Commission if the Germans saw him, Captain B., lunching with an American Vice-Consul when those Germans knew that he, Jacques, would refuse to lunch with them! I reminded Jacques that there was a slight difference between the relations which existed between France and Germany, and France and the United States, but he was adamant. He did not say that he himself would not come, but that Ken could not. I telephoned Ken and explained the situation to him. I was furiously indignant, but Ken only laughed, for he understood the French attitude toward and their fear of the Germans, and he said that he would not, for the world, compromise the French army by dining openly with any member of it. So we were only seven, not eight, for lunch. The German officers who were, that day, in uniform, watched our arrival with keen interest, I was told afterward, and bowed formally to Jacques who was wearing his uniform, and who bowed just as formally in return. When Jacques was in civilian clothes he ignored these men whom he saw in General Martin's office every day. He was obliged, as an army officer, to salute them, but as a civilian he was supposed to ignore them.

You never saw the French people mingling with the Germans in Morocco as in Paris. You rarely saw a French person speak to a German, but if such conversations did take place, this was immediately reported to General Noguès at the Residence at Rabat. He, General Noguès, had given orders that the names of any French persons seen talking to a German were to be sent immediately to him, and I know that, in Marrakech at least, this order was carried out. The civilian French did not know this was being done, and I wonder what has become of those few who openly engaged the Germans in conversation on several occasions in the Mamounia Hotel? One was a Dr. Lulutre of Rabat; he and his wife did not attempt to conceal their ardent pro-Nazi sympathies. I saw the Doctor talking animatedly with the German officers of our hotel, and shake their hands in the most friendly way, on more than one occasion. Then there was a French woman who lived in the hotel, the wealthy widow of the man who made

his fortune in a famous brand of liqueur. She would create an opportunity, if one did not present itself, to talk to the German officers, and I got the distinct impression that they would be just as glad if she would leave them alone.

Those Germans in our hotel had obviously been carefully chosen for their intelligence and good manners. They behaved, apart from one or two isolated instances, with impeccable correctness, and this did not fail to impress the French in Morocco as it had at first impressed the French in occupied France. French people do like to see dignity and formality in public, even when it is only propaganda. These officers followed their own pursuits, and kept entirely to themselves, partly by choice and partly because they were ostracized by most of the French people living there. They listened to their radios, sent their reports to Weisbaden by radio and by mail, sat in the public salons during the evenings, to keep frank watch over the arrivals, and to see who talked to whom. They even noted what books and magazines everyone read. They rode horseback, played tennis, and played ping-pong on the hotel ping-pong table. There was one officer, a captain, who managed to make his very courtesy an insult. He looked at everyone with a sneer, and was thoroughly detested by everybody. He walked with a slight limp, as he had been injured in a parachute landing; his brother was a consul from Germany to Japan. He was young, as were the other officers, all of them being in their late twenties or early thirties.

Other German officers of the Armistice Commission would come to Marrakech from time to time. They came to receive reports, or to make tours of inspection of that region and those farther south. There are four military regions in French Morocco: Marrakech, Fez, Meknes and Taza. Each of those had a general at its head. The general of the Marrakech region was General Martin, a stickler for convention, a man who sometimes could not see the woods for the trees. Most of the protests the Germans made to General Martin were given courteous consideration, and it was to him the German officers of the Commission would protest when they had become anxious concerning the activities of the American Vice-Consuls, more particularly Kenneth Pendar's. They tried to know just what Ken and the others were up to every minute of every day, whether they had been talking too much with the natives or with the French officers and officials. And whether they might be trying to counteract the very good job of propaganda which they, the Germans, were doing in their Arabic broadcasts. The German

Consul came often to the Mamounia with his wife, from the German Consulate at Casablanca, so did other members of the staff and personnel of the German Consulate. A German general came one day. We all were eating quietly in the main dining room when he appeared on the steps leading down into the room. The Nazi officers already at their tables, leapt to their feet, thirty pairs of Nazi heels were smartly clicked and the Nazi salute given, the noise of which startled those of us who had not noticed the general's arrival.

At lunch that next day, I noticed that everyone in the dining room was looking at me, and up at a balcony over the entrance steps. I looked to see what was attracting everybody's attention and saw one of the German secretaries with a camera taking pictures of Rose-Hélène and me. The German stayed on the balcony for some minutes, trying to get his picture, and I trying to frustrate his efforts in various ways. It was most disagreeable. Later, in the garden, I was reading alone, Rose-Hélène was taking her nap. I happened to look up from my book and there was the same German with his camera, just in front of me. I got up, turned my chair around so that my back was toward him. A little later he appeared again; this time I put a newspaper over my face and pretended to go to sleep.

IV

About the middle of November, I left Rose-Hélène with a friend and went to Casablanca for a few days, to make my peace with the American Consulate there. I had not yet applied for the extension of the validation of my passport which had expired in Lisbon, for I had not been able to go to Casablanca because of our inoculations and vaccinations. The matter was ever on my mind, however, and I knew it had to be done. The Consul, Mr. Stanton, was very angry with me for having come to Morocco on a French passport, and without the permission of the United States Government. I called to his attention the fact that I had had that permission, and that it had merely become invalid with the expiration of the validation of my passport, and that by a matter of only two days. After telling me, in no uncertain terms, his personal and official opinion of people like me who ignored regulations and broke rules, he extended the validation of my passport for another six months and I was once more in good standing with my

government. Rose-Hélène, with her dual nationality, was once more on two valid passports.

A number of American books and magazines were loaned me by various people in the Consulate to take back to Marrakech with me. There were some fairly recent copies of *Life* among the magazines which I was delighted to have as one seldom saw an American magazine in Morocco. I read some of these in the train going back to Marrakech. In the compartment with me, seated just opposite, there was a French officer, a captain. He eyed the magazine for some time before he asked me whether I would be so kind as to lend him some of the *Lifes*. I gave him two or three and went on reading. When we were nearing Marrakech, he returned the magazines to me with many thanks.

The next day, at lunch, I saw the captain in the dining room of the hotel, and when I went to the garden for my coffee after lunch, having put Rose-Hélène to bed for her nap, he came and sat down beside me and began talking in a low tone of voice. He asked me whether I was staying in the hotel, where my home was, and my husband. When I told him my name, and what Department we came from, it developed that he knew Michel, my brother-in-law, quite well. He told me that he, Captain Coutand, was a liaison officer on the Armistice Commission and therefore was in a position, perhaps, to be of help to me and asked me to let him know if ever there should be anything he could do for me. "But," he added, "please don't speak to me in the hotel or show in any way that you know me. If the Germans should see me talking to you, they would lose confidence in me as a liaison officer, and I could not remain on the armistice commission." I thanked him for his kind offer, while wondering how I could let him know if I should need anything if I were not allowed to speak to him.

About a month later, Captain Coutand whispered to me, as I passed him in the salon. He looked furtively around, then engineered me into a corner. "I want to warn you that you have been reported to Weisbaden by the Germans for making Gaullist propaganda." I stared at him in amazement. "I accused of making propaganda for General de Gaulle?" I exclaimed, incredulously. "Why, I have made it a point never to discuss politics with anyone in the hotel!" It seemed, however, that I had been so accused, and that my name had been placed on the list of Nazi suspects. All this, Captain Coutand explained, was the result of my having loaned several copies of *Life* to friends in the hotel. The Germans, who appeared to know what issues I had loaned, claimed

that the — number had contained a long article about General de Gaulle, and the — issue had an article against Vichy. It was on the basis of this that I was accused of making Gaullist propaganda!

So I suppose my name is still on the Nazi list of suspects, and that my photograph is on file at Weisbaden with a full report of my subversive activities, but, since that has never seemed to bring any harm to Robert (as I at first feared it might), it doesn't worry me very much.

V

Monday morning, December 8th, I turned on my radio as usual at nine o'clock to hear the news, expecting to hear what was going on in Libya, and, to my shocked surprise and horror, I learned about Pearl Harbor. I was unable to think clearly, or to do anything, all that day. I listened, at six-thirty, to President Roosevelt address the Congress and ask them to declare war upon Japan. It was a moving, solemn and impressive moment for me as I sat there alone in my hotel room in French Morocco and realized that my country was at war.

Then, on December 11th, I listened for nearly two hours to Hitler addressing the Reichstag and announcing that a state of war then existed between his country and the Allied nations. Between Germany and the United States. And there in the hotel, were thirty or forty German officers and men, and one and a half Americans. I was the only one there who could wave the American flag, and I did feel that it ought to be waved. I had been invited for dinner that night with Ken and some other guests, so I decided to wear an evening dress. I had not worn one for more than two years, but this, I felt, was definitely the time and place to wear one. The dress I chose for the occasion was periwinkle blue, buttoned rather high at the neck in back, then open to the waist, and it had little puffed sleeves. I put Rose-Hélène to bed, then dressed in the bathroom; I looked all right to her when I came out—until I turned around. Then she exclaimed in horror, "Oh, Mama, your dress is open all the way down the back!" I told her I knew it, it was supposed to be like that. She hadn't minded when I had told her I was going out that evening for a little while, but I had a hard time convincing her that it was all right for me to go downstairs with my back so exposed. She had, long since, begun to take an interest in my clothes and my appearance, and she was a most exacting little

person to please. That was really a good thing for me, for I had become less interested in my appearance now that I no longer had my husband to dress for; it was Rose-Hélène who kept me up to the mark.

This one evening she finally accepted the idea of my going down to the lobby with my evening dress on, but she still did not approve of it. I kissed her good night, told her to go to sleep like a good girl and I would be home early, and went downstairs to wait for Ken to come for me in his car. I was a few minutes early and, as I hoped, the Germans passed through the hall and saw me, bedecked in the finery I meant to be symbolical of waving the American flag in their faces and which I fervently trusted they understood to be such. That was the only time, during all our months at the Mamounia, that I wore an evening dress, so they should have understood. Once away from the hotel and the eyes of the Germans, I could be as solemn as I felt. Most of our French friends who were at the dinner were delighted with the turn of events which marked, they were confident, the beginning of the end for Germany. No one of us doubted that victory would be ours, on all fronts, but how many years would pass, how many lives would be lost before that goal was attained?

There were food restrictions in Morocco when we first went there, and they became more severe as the months passed. They never reached the point of actual deprivation, however; certain commodities were difficult to get, but one could get them, and no one ever went hungry, as in France. Wives and mothers were desperate, trying to find materials with which to clothe their families, or thread with which to keep what they had in repair. Cigarettes were scarce, and poor. But one always had fruit, nuts and olives, and fresh vegetables from Algeria. The food at the hotel was very good and, although the quality became poorer and the quantity less before we left, we never had any reason to complain, especially since we knew that the French people in France were getting along on so much less without complaint.

One advantage in Morocco was that prisoners of war had their own ration cards. A card was given me for Robert soon after we arrived in Marrakech and I was able to get, on this, one pound of sugar a month, tobacco and cigarettes, chocolate, sardines, a sausage, and a tin of tomatoes, peas, or other vegetables. It was worth the journey to Morocco to be able to send parcels to Robert, filled with the things he liked and needed. He sent me the labels I needed for sending these parcels, as soon as he heard that we had arrived safely in Morocco. He was delighted at

my escape out of the occupied zone, and happy that Rose-Hélène and I were together once more and where we would not suffer from hunger or cold.

Through Kenneth Pendar I met the Marquis and Marquise de Chaponay, the latter born Princess Genéviève of Orléans, a princess of the royal family of France. Her mother is the Duchess of Vendôme, a sister of the late King Albert of the Belgians. Madame de Chaponay, therefore, is a first cousin of King Leopold of the Belgians, and of his sister, Marie José, the Crown Princess of Italy. Princess Genéviève offered to do what she could to get my husband released and, to this end, she wrote her mother who was living near Switzerland, to ask her if she, the Duchess of Vendôme, could do something for Robert. The Duchess had succeeded in securing the release of four out of four prisoners for whose liberation she had made requests, so I was very hopeful, when she agreed to do what she could for Robert, that this fifth request might also be granted. Madame de Chaponay also wrote her cousin, Marie José, with whom she was on intimate terms, to ask whether she would be able to do anything, but the Crown Princess replied that her influence in Italy was not very great, and that she who had been born a Belgian Princess could not do very much for anyone, not even herself, just then.

So we pinned our hopes on the Duchess of Vendôme and it was not until many weeks later that we realized that this latest effort was as futile as all my others had been, and Robert and I had to find comfort in the fact that we were, all three, in good health, that our home was intact and waiting for us to return.

On October 25th, General Huntziger came to Marrakech on a tour of inspection of French Morocco, as the personal representative of Marshal Pétain. I sat in the reviewing stand with a friend and her cousin who was the wife of the President of the Tribunal of Marrakech. This latter was one of the most ardent and outspoken partisans of the Allied cause, and he got into serious difficulties because of that. General Huntziger was first welcomed by the Pasha, El Gloui, according to tradition, by being presented with milk and dates, after which the parade began. It was a colorful review, with the officers in their chic Spahi uniforms, mounted on the spirited and proud Arabian horses. The General came into the reviewing stand after the parade to shake hands with some of the dignitaries, European and indigene, so I had a close view of the man who, sixteen days later, was killed in a plane

crash. His death was a great loss to the true French cause, for he was not in sympathy with Laval and his collaborationist policy, and he was a competent general, a man of conscience and honor.

It was often said that one had only to spend a few months at the Mamounia Hotel and one would see, or meet, everyone of interest and importance in Morocco. It was the social center for French Morocco, as well as the Mecca for tourists. Reservations were made a year in advance for rooms in the hotel at Christmas, New Year's and Easter, and people often had to wait two and three months to get accommodations during the height of the season. Among the guests who came to the hotel while we were there, were Pierre Lyautey, the nephew of the great Marshal Lyautey, himself a journalist and writer of some note. Monsieur Corbin, former Ambassador to England, spent a few days at the hotel and was invited to Ken's villa for lunch. I had the pleasure of sitting on Monsieur Corbin's right, and had an interesting talk with this "courageous and high-minded" man, as André Maurois rightly calls him. One evening, General Juin came to the Mamounia on a flying visit with some of his staff. When the General and I were introduced, I wondered why he took my hand with his left and not his right hand; I did not know, until afterward, that his right arm had been wounded and that he is unable to use the hand of that arm except for holding a cigarette. We sat in the big hall of the hotel until very late, I playing bridge with some of the officers of the General's staff, the General and the others chatting and telling jokes. The Germans sat up until the bitter end, pretending to read but watching and listening to all that was said and done.

At Christmas, there was an influx of guests in the hotel. One evening in the dining room, I counted representatives of eleven countries eating in that one room; there were citizens of France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Russia (White Russia, of course), Norway, Denmark, Japan (the Consul), England, Germany and the United States. The Italians, it was interesting to note, did not sit at the table with the Germans, nor have very much to do with them outside the dining room, although they were there in an official capacity. It was curious, our eating peaceably in the same room when elsewhere in the world our compatriots were killing each other.

Everyone's nerves were on edge those days in early 1942, in French Morocco. The atmosphere was charged with electricity. Where would

the lightning strike? Who, in short, would the attackers be, the Germans, or the English and the Americans? In their hearts, most of the French officers of the army and air, the officials and civilians, as well as the plain soldier, hoped that, if anyone came, it would be the Americans. Not the English, not the Germans, but the Americans. One officer who had an important and key post said to me one day that, no matter who attacked French Morocco, the French army would fight to defend that protectorate. France could not afford to lose even more prestige with the natives than she had already lost. Presumably Morocco would still be under French control after the war, and France's dignity had to be preserved, her honor had to be defended before the indigenes if France was to keep their respect and maintain discipline in that somewhat restive country.

Most of the officers talked that way—they did not dare say anything else. Most of the French people were very careful about what they said, those days, and to whom they said it. They were cautious and watchful and they knew that they themselves were being watched. There were so many things to fear; the officers of the German Armistice Commission and the numerous officials in the German Consulate were ever present, ever watching, ever listening. No one wanted to be put on their list of suspects. Everyone feared the English black list, too, and the alert watchfulness of the French Deuxième Bureau, the secret police.

So the French in French Morocco in 1942, dissimulated, equivocated, and evaded every issue. They were perhaps not quite honest with themselves, or with each other, in the attitude they took during those dangerous days when everyone felt that some word, lightly spoken, some careless act, might lead to their individual or collective downfall. There had been disastrous consequences for a few people who had been rash enough to express sympathy with the Allied cause and this made the others even more cautious.

Some of us outsiders, looking on, became discouraged, disgusted, even, by this attitude of the French. We thought them stupid and unable to understand the tragedy of France—the real tragedy which was being enacted at Vichy—or we thought they were stubborn and wouldn't understand. Now we know that they were neither stupid nor stubborn. They were playing for time. I am sure that at least ninety-five per cent of the people I knew and saw—and I met a great many—are glad that circumstances have made it possible for them to have jumped on the side of the fence they preferred, all along, to be on—on *our* side.

VI

In January, I had an attack of malaria, followed by a liver attack which left me tired and depressed. I had never known I had a liver until I went to North Africa, but everyone seems to have trouble with that organ in Morocco, and I was no exception. This particular day, I was so tired I could not lift my arms even to comb Rose-Hélène's hair, and I was so depressed I felt an overwhelming desire to cry. I telephoned a friend and asked her whether she could take Rose-Hélène for the day, which she could and did do. I spent most of that day in bed, and was lying on the chaise longue on our terrace when Rose-Hélène returned late that afternoon. I was still crying, and had wept all day. My child looked at me in consternation and amazement—she had never seen Mama cry before. I had not wanted her to have childhood memories of a mournful mother who was perpetually in tears, but that day my depression and despair had been too strong. My small daughter climbed into my lap, nearly in tears herself. She put her arms around my neck and enquired, in a choked little voice, "What is the matter, my poor little Mama?" I was unable to answer, but she urged me again to tell her why I was crying. "Oh, I want so terribly to see Papa?" I sobbed. Rose-Hélène looked relieved. "You remember, Mama, the Germans said he would come back soon." "Yes, they said that, but I don't believe it," I said forlornly, the tears still streaming. She insisted that, really, the officer had said Papa would come soon, and he surely would come, I would see. "But he isn't here now, and I am so unhappy, so alone." My little girl reminded me, quite logically, that she was there, I wasn't alone, but I continued to cry, like an unreasoning and unreasonable child. Rose-Hélène, for the moment, was my mother. She looked at me in silence for a few minutes then she said earnestly, "*Soyez courageuse, Maman, comme moi.*" (Be courageous, Mama, like me.) Well, that did it. I thought, "Why, of course she is brave, my little Rose-Hélène. Hasn't she had to leave her home, and Véronique, and her doll carriage and Po-paule and her other toys, all of which she loved so much? She has no home, no Papa, no little friends, only a few playmates who come for a few days, then go away. Nothing she has is permanent, everything is temporary, and she knows it. She becomes attached to a person, a place or a thing, and then has to leave it; she takes long and tiring journeys without in the least knowing or understanding why we are obliged to take them; she simply goes along with me like a baby kan-

garoo in its mother's pouch. She never whimpers, never complains, she does what is asked or expected of her with never a wail or a whine. She *is* courageous, and I am very proud of her and extremely ashamed of myself. I shall never cry like this again." And I never have, not, at any rate, before Rose-Hélène.

I met several English missionaries, among them George Forrest who, with his wife Rowena and little girl Beverly, lived in the zone of insecurity of the Atlas Mountains, about seventy miles from Marrakech. Rowena wrote to invite Rose-Hélène to come and spend a week or two with them. It would be nice for my little girl, she wrote, to have a change of air and scene, and to have someone to play with.

We went, then, one afternoon in January, by truck to Tiflet. It took us four hours to go the distance of seventy miles, for we were climbing most of the way, and had to make frequent stops to take on and let off the native passengers who were riding on the rear of the truck. I spent one night with the Forrests. They were a most congenial young couple who had been sent to French Morocco from England three years before. George had had a pastorate in a church in Casablanca before he had been transferred to Tiflet, and he and Rowena were doing excellent work among the natives of their region when the fall of France came, and put an end to their activities. The German Armistice Commission feared that the Forrests, being English, would use their missionary work as a cover for espionage, propaganda, or underground activities, and so a very close watch was kept on them. They were forbidden to have any contact with the natives, and the French officers and their wives, with one or two exceptions, were extremely cautious not to see too much of the young couple with their two-year-old baby girl. Rowena was expecting another baby in the summer, and the French refused to give her a *bon* for a layette, saying that layette clothes and materials were for French babies only—even though much of that material had come to Morocco from America. Rowena accepted this with good grace, but she was rather worried as to what she could put on her baby when it arrived, and what to use for diapers. I gave her some outing flannel I had bought in Lisbon for Rose-Hélène, with which to make night-dresses for the baby, and Ken managed to bring her some other necessary articles from Tangiers.

While Rose-Hélène was at Tiflet, I went to Casablanca and Rabat for a few days. Maurice Chevalier came to Rabat while I was there, to give a concert. I had always been among Chevalier's most enthusiastic ad-

mirers, and had not heard that he was a collaborationist, so it was with eager anticipation that I went to his concert, with two of my friends. Chevalier had been allowed to bring a film with him, and we were looking forward to seeing a good movie preceding his singing, as the latest and best films would, naturally, be available to him. His plane arrived in Rabat only an hour or so before the concert, too late to advertise either the film or his own program, so no one knew what songs Chevalier would sing or what kind of film we would see.

The movie was put on first. The house was packed, people standing, everyone anticipating a treat that evening. The film had not been on for very long before some of us realized that it was a German one. The voices were speaking French, but one could see that the actors and actresses were talking German. It was a third-rate film, a very old one, and badly acted. I whispered to Solange beside me, "How disgusting of Chevalier, that is a German film." She did not agree with me at first, but she and the entire audience realized this when there was a scene in a railroad station where the signs were in German. That part was run off quickly, but not quickly enough, and the audience began to express its indignation by whistles and boos. The film had to be taken off and Chevalier came on to sing. His reception was a cold one, and his songs were barely applauded. He seemed much older than he had looked only a year before in Paris, and appeared tired. He had lost his light touch and spontaneous gaiety. Something had gone out of his soul.

When I returned to Marrakech, I found a letter from Rowena Forrest, telling me that Rose-Hélène had come down with chicken-pox just two days after she had arrived there! This meant that Rose-Hélène, with the Forrests, was quarantined. It also meant that Rowena had had the care of my child during her siege of chicken-pox, as well as that of her own who naturally came down with the disease, in due course. As soon as the quarantine period had passed and it was safe to bring Rose-Hélène back to the hotel, George brought her down on the truck. I hadn't had the slightest notion that Rose-Hélène had been exposed to the malady, and this Rowena and George understood. They were as kind and generous about the whole affair as they would be. They said they had enjoyed having Rose-Hélène who, after the first two or three days, had not been very sick, and Rose-Hélène herself kept only the pleasantest memories of her trip to Tiflet.

As compensation for her illness, I bought Rose-Hélène a canary, which sang most beautifully. We were able to tame him so that he would

fly about the room, light on our fingers, and go back into his cage when he was tired. We called him Sidi, and he took the place of Claudine who, by that time, had had to be discarded because of her optical and vocal troubles. We both became very fond of Sidi, and often spoke of the happy day when we could take him back to France, to L'Ormeau.

VII

In March, we had an opportunity of driving to Fez with Ken who was going there to open the British Consulate which was to be taken over by the American Consulate. I had always wanted to see Fez, and welcomed the opportunity of going there, and in so agreeable a way. Ken stopped at the Mamounia one morning early to get Rose-Hélène and me, and we set forth for Fez, three hundred miles northeast of Marrakech. The drive was a beautiful one, and the first view of Fez confirmed the impression I had always had that it was an enchanting city. Rose-Hélène and I stayed at the lovely Palais Jamai Hotel, which had formerly been a palace belonging to a fabulously wealthy Moor. There was a typhus epidemic in Fez, so I did not take Rose-Hélène outside the grounds of the hotel, but prowled around Fez by myself, or with Jean Dewez who came up later to stay with Ken.

Rose-Hélène had her fourth birthday in Fez. Ken gave a little party for her at the British Consulate, at which only he, Jean Dewez, and I were present. There was a cake, with four candles, in honor of the occasion and, as I looked at my daughter's dear little face, flushed from the effort of blowing out all four candles at one big puff, I wondered where she would spend her next birthday. The first had been spent in Paris, with Papa; the second at L'Ormeau, alone with Mama and Véronique; the third in Paris, again without Papa, and now the fourth in Fez, Papa still absent.

Who could say, who could tell where we would be on March 22nd, 1943, and whether we would be a united family of three by then, or still only two?

VIII

While we were in Fez, I obtained a Spanish visa to go to Larache in the Spanish zone of Morocco, to visit Lizette and Dr. A. The French

permission I got by telephoning Colonel Herviot, the Chef of the Sécurité at Rabat, who authorized the police at Fez to put such a visa on my American passport.

When I looked at train schedules and connections after having secured these visas, however, I found that it was a long and tiring journey to Larache. So I sent a telegram to Lizette, one morning, telling her that we would not come, after all.

Toward noon of that same day, Señor E., in the Spanish Consulate at Fez, telephoned me to ask when I planned to go to Larache on the visa which had been granted me some days before. I told him that I had decided not to go as the journey would be too tiring for my little girl. He said that that was a pity, for he was leaving the following morning in his car for Tangiers, to spend his Easter holiday there. He was driving up alone and he had to pass through Larache; would we not like to go with him? Would we *not*? I told Señor E. that we would be ready to leave at eight-thirty the next morning, the hour he planned to leave, and I sent a second telegram to Lizette to say that Rose-Hélène and I would arrive in time for lunch the next day, and that the Spanish Consul would be with us. This telegram would be received only an hour or so after the first which had announced that we were not coming at all, and would have thrown some people into a state of confusion. But not Lizette. It would take more than a couple of contradictory telegrams to throw *her* into confusion.

I have never met anyone with the zest for life, the enthusiasm for excitement or adventure, the whole-hearted interest in people and in changing scenes, as Lizette A. I looked forward with much pleasure and anticipation to the ten days Rose-Hélène and I would spend with Lizette and her husband at their villa at Larache.

Señor E., like all Spaniards, was afflicted with *mañana* and, instead of being ready to leave at eight-thirty, he did not call for us until nearly ten o'clock. He had a big Studebaker car which he let me drive nearly all the way. He may have been an efficient adjunct of the Consulate, and was a charming man, but driving a car was not one of his major accomplishments. I felt much safer when I was at the wheel and he was holding Rose-Hélène on his knees. As American and Spaniard, we warily kept away from all mention of politics during our ride which was a most agreeable three-hour drive. Rose-Hélène provided the neutral element which provided harmony and ensured friendliness among us all and we, all three, enjoyed the trip immensely. It was April first, a

Spanish holiday which marked the third anniversary of the end of the civil war in Spain.

The border crossing was easy, Rose-Hélène and I receiving the backwash of the bows and flourishes with which Señor E. was welcomed into his own territory, and all of us being eased into Spanish Morocco on the crest of a diplomatic wave. We arrived at Larache at one o'clock, much too early for lunch, by Spanish standards. Lizette's open arms were waiting to receive us, and she welcomed Señor E. too, who was invited to stay for lunch, which invitation he accepted and then went on to Tangiers where he planned to spend Easter.

The A.'s villa was a charming one, overlooking the sea. The garden was a riot of bloom, even at that early date; honeysuckle, mimosa and columbine grew everywhere in profusion, and bougainvillaea vines trailed over the walls and roof of the villa. Very near the A.'s villa was the home of the Duchess of Guise, whose intimate friend Lizette had been for more than twenty years. The day following Rose-Hélène's and my arrival at Larache, one of Madame's daughters, Princess Isabel, came to see Lizette. She was tall, gay, and very attractive. Her husband, Prince Murat, was in England working for the Allied cause, but that fact, while commonly known, was never spoken of. Princess Isabel and her children divided their time between Fedala, where her family-in-law had an estate, and Rabat, where her brother, the Count de Paris, lived with his wife and their seven children. Now the Princess had come to Larache, without her children, to spend Easter with Madame, her mother. She told us that the Duchess would like us all to come to the villa on Sunday, which was Easter, to have tea and to hunt Easter eggs, which invitation we were glad, and Rose-Hélène thrilled, to accept. Good Friday, we all spent quietly. It happened also to be an Arab fête and a Jewish holiday, the holidays of those three religions all falling at the same time that year.

On Saturday, Princess Françoise, another of Madame's daughters, and the widow of Prince Christopher of Greece, came to see us. She was very tall, also, very slender, less vivacious than Princess Isabel, but most gracious and charming. She had a little boy, Prince Michel, who was three-and-a-quarter years old at that time, he being nine months younger than Rose-Hélène. He came that day too, with his mother and his nurse, bringing some flowers for Rose-Hélène. So pleased was she at receiving a pretty bouquet from such a nice little boy, she threw her arms around Michel's neck and kissed him on his royal cheek.

Easter Sunday we went to the Duchess' villa for tea. Madame was tired now, and sad, but one could still see traces of her former beauty, and her mobile countenance reflected the sympathy and understanding of her heart. Rose-Hélène stared in astonishment at her Mama making a deep curtsy to this lady, then at tante Lizette who also curtsied and kissed the hand of this same lady. Then she saw us both curtsy to the other two tall ladies there. What was this? She knew that little girls were supposed to curtsy, and she seldom forgot to perform her own very nicely, but she had never seen Mama do it before. Obviously, it would not suffice for her, Rose-Hélène, to make only her usual curtsy with all these extraordinary things going on. This must be a special occasion which called for special behavior. So, when a boy of ten was introduced to us, the son of the French Consul at Larache, Rose-Hélène curtsied to him and kissed his hand, to his utter confusion and embarrassment, and to our delight.

During tea, the Duchess asked me about my husband, who she knew was a prisoner. I told her all I had done to get him released, and she listened with great sympathy and interest. She asked me to give her the necessary details concerning Robert's rank, regiment, place of internment, and so on, and she would do what she could to effect his release. This she later did. She wrote her sister in Spain, the Infanta Louisa d'Orléans who lives in Seville, asking her whether she could do anything for Robert; l'Infanta replied that she thought she could. For several months after that, I believed that I might receive news, any day, that Robert had been released, for l'Infanta's influence was not inconsiderable and she used it in the highest places, but this, like all other efforts, came to nothing. The Duchesse de Guise wrote her sister, the Dowager Duchess of Aosta in Italy, also, she whose son had recently died in Kenya, a prisoner of the English. (The Duchesse de Guise's third daughter, Princess Anne, was his widow.) Mussolini was supposed to entertain a deep respect and an almost reverent regard for the elder Duchess of Aosta, and he might have listened sympathetically to any request she might make, but since Mussolini was in no position to ask favors of Hitler, nothing came of that connection either. It seemed as though every lead I had come to a dead end, but that did not discourage me from following every and any one I heard of, while Robert still sat in his prison camp, hopefully awaiting the result of my efforts on his behalf.

After tea, we went to the garden to see how the egg hunt was getting

on. The three children of the French Consul, Prince Michel and Rose-Hélène were having a hilarious time. We took pictures of them and joined in the hunt for the eggs which had not been found and, altogether, it was the nicest Easter Rose-Hélène and I had had for three years.

It was with regret that we left Larache and Lizette and her husband. We took the bus to Rabat, a dreadful, ramshackle autocar which had no springs, and was extremely dirty. There were five indigenes in first class with us. The natives were supposed to ride in the rear, in third class, with the poultry and rabbits and other animals with which they seemed always to travel, but the five who were riding in front with us were of a superior class than the others, and far less dirty. The others were filthy. One could see the lice crawling on the heads of the men and children, and could imagine what was hidden by the picturesque, flowing veils of the women. Flies swarmed about them, crawled into the eyes of the babies who were fastened, papoose-fashion, on their mothers' backs. It was a hot, tiring ride, and it lasted seven hours.

IX

We went, upon our arrival in Rabat, to the Balima Hotel which had run down sadly since we had stayed there six months before. There was no toilet paper in our bathroom, and I was informed that each guest had to find and supply his own, but that there was none to be had in Rabat. The sheets were darned and patched, the window shades were broken, the springs of the upholstered chairs were sagging almost to the floor, everything was shabby and in a woeful state of disrepair. The manager was discouraged and unhappy about it all, but said there was nothing he could do; it was becoming increasingly difficult to obtain cotton or linen, to get broken furniture repaired, or to find paper for writing letters, or for the bathrooms.

The morning following our arrival, Rose-Hélène had a very bad earache and a temperature of 104°. I called a doctor and it was discovered that she had an abscess in her right ear, which meant that we could not go on to Marrakech that day, as I had planned. Instead, we took Rose-Hélène to the hospital, which was supposed to be the best in Rabat. I was informed when I got there, with Rose-Hélène in my arms, that I would have to furnish the sheets and towels for my child's

needs, the hospital's linen supply being completely exhausted. Since I had not been traveling with sheets and towels in my luggage, I had to telephone various friends in Rabat until I found one who agreed to lend me two or three sheets and some towels and pillow-cases. I watched that linen almost as anxiously as I did my sick child, for borrowing linen was like borrowing precious jewels.

While we were in Rabat, Laval got back into the Vichy government. He was to be Minister of State, of the Interior, of Foreign Affairs and of Information! Admiral Leahy was recalled to Washington, and all Americans were requested by the State Department to leave the unoccupied zone of France. Relations between my two countries were becoming more and more strained, which caused Robert and me much anxiety, concern, and unhappiness. A genuine sympathy and friendship had existed between France and the United States for many long years; the peoples of those two countries understood and liked one another as well as foreigners ever can like or understand each other. France had helped a young America in her struggle for independence, and American soldiers had fought in and for France in 1917-18. Those soldiers had made themselves extremely popular during their stay in France, and nine out of ten Frenchmen who remembered the last war, were waiting for the day when the Yankees would come again to fight with and for the French nation which, in 1940, had been defeated on the field of battle, but had not yet been conquered. Now it appeared that the two countries were drawing farther and farther apart, and that was a source of deep regret to all but the few who were in power, and to their satellites, to those who had hitched their wagons to the star of the Third Reich, the opportunists who believed that that star was in the ascendancy.

After ten days, Rose-Hélène was well enough to go back to Marrakech. We stopped over for a day or two in Casablanca, for I had heard that Mr. Stanton, the American Consul, was leaving for Kenya, and his house at Anfa could be rented. Rose-Hélène and I went out to look at it. It was a comfortable house, with a beautiful view over the sea, but the Stantons were taking all their furniture with them, and furnishing a house was not an easy matter those days. The marketing would have been a problem, too, for Anfa was several miles outside Casablanca; the bus service between the two places would not be altogether satisfactory for marketing purposes, and I still had done nothing about

learning to ride a bicycle. So I did not take the house, the only one I ever was offered, or could have rented in Morocco.

Had I rented that house, we would have had an excellent view of the American troops when they arrived in Morocco less than seven months later, and of the naval and military operations which took place in the region of Anfa. We would have been only a few doors from the place where the Casablanca conference took place, and we would now be living cosily under the protection of our own American troops of occupation, not far from our home in France, not nearly so far from Robert as we now are.

But we could not know all that at the time. The Germans, we thought then, were just as likely to arrive there as the Americans, and that would not have been quite so cosy.

There was an *alerte* while we were in Casablanca, and it upset Rose-Hélène quite a lot. She was in the bathtub splashing about happily when the sirens sounded. She looked up, startled and paling at the sound she had not heard for more than a year. "What is that awful noise, Mama?" she asked in alarm. "Oh, probably there is a fire somewhere, it is nothing, *chérie*." "But I don't like that noise. I hope it won't come again, do you think it will?" As she spoke it did sound again, and she said, in deep distress, "But I am afraid, Mama—I don't know why I am afraid, but I am." I did not tell her why she was afraid, nor what the sound really was, for I wanted her to forget the significance of air-raid sirens. But she could not eat her supper that evening, and I was glad to be taking her back to Marrakech where all was peaceful and quiet.

We drove the 156 miles back to Marrakech in three-and-a-half hours in a car borrowed from a friend. I had no desire to linger along that road, as we were the only Europeans in sight during all that time, and ours was the only car on the road. We drove miles without seeing anything at all, then we would come to a *bled* where there would be a team of oxen (often a team of one ox and a camel) plowing the fields, the indigenes trailing behind the plows, their white burnouses billowing out behind them. We passed groups of camels plodding along the broad highway, and men on horseback and on donkeys, men on foot—but all were natives. I hoped the car would not break down along that route where there were no garages or repair shops, and only one or two towns—and I alone in the car with a tiny girl. We had a big cage on the ledge behind us in the car, filled with canaries and love birds and

parakeets, which we were taking to Ken's villa. Their twittering and fluttering kept Rose-Hélène amused and diverted, and she loved that long drive. She looked up at me as we sped along, her face wreathed in smiles, and said, "We are two little comrades, aren't we, Mama?" We were, indeed, and I realized, as ever, how lucky I was to have so gay a companion as Rose-Hélène.

It was April 22nd when we got back to the Mamounia. We had been away for more than a month, and were both glad to settle down quietly in the hotel which had come to seem like home to us. I found several letters from Robert awaiting me, which was the nicest welcome I could hope to have. He told me that American prisoners had begun arriving in his camp, that that had acted like a tonic on the prisoners already there. English prisoners had, long before, joined the French prisoners in that Oflag, and they had been allowed to mingle freely with one another. Then the Serbs arrived, and the Russians. Now the Americans. The Russians were kept off by themselves, Robert wrote me; the other prisoners were not permitted to have any contact with them. There was an easy and friendly camaraderie between the French, English and American prisoners, the Americans and English sharing their food parcels with the unfortunate French, and even giving them articles of clothing. Robert was glad to have someone with whom he could speak English, with whom he could talk of England and America; he had American cigarettes to smoke, English books to read, and his letters were distinctly more cheerful in tone. Most of the American prisoners were aviators, and they had brought the latest news and developments of the war and had undone, in one hour, the effects of months of German lies and propaganda which had been fed to the prisoners.

On April 28th came the news of General Giraud's dramatic escape from his prison at Koenigsberg, which stirred and thrilled us all. General Giraud was well known in Morocco, having been in command of a regiment there at one time. I talked with many officers who had served under him, some of whom knew him well, and, to one man, they worshipped him. "He is our hero, General Giraud," they said to me. "He is to us what General MacArthur is to you today." They said that something would surely happen now; a man like General Giraud could not be free without there being important repercussions. They all avowed that wherever, in the future, the General might ask them to go, there they would go. He was, they all told me, a man of sterling character; of absolute integrity; of invincible faith in the France he so

deeply loved; of unflinching courage, moral and physical. He was not a diplomat, they agreed, and never could be. He was too brusque, too much the soldier. He directed and fought military battles, but he could not wage diplomatic wars of words or of political strategy. Thank God, those French officers said, thank God he has escaped. We may need him again, one day—and when and if we do, he will be there, where he is most needed, and we shall be at his side.

In early May, the Sultan arrived in Marrakech for a month's visit. The hotel was crowded with the overflow from his palace, with the people who follow him wherever he goes. There were indigenes of wealth and importance, pashas, caids and khalifs, and many European officials. The Sultan went, every Friday, to a different mosque to worship, that everyone might have an opportunity to see him. The Moslem women are not allowed to attend religious services in the mosques, so they had to be content, as we had, with seeing the Sultan on his way to or from the mosques, or on other occasions when he appeared in public. He was greatly loved by his own people, and respected and liked by the Residence at Rabat; he was an intelligent man, and one who could be trusted.

It was in May that the heat began. The thermometer registered, at the beginning of May, only 87° in the shade, but there was not a breath of air stirring, and one felt absolutely suffocated. A few days later, the sirocco came, that blast of heat which swept down upon us from the Libyan desert, filling our mouths, our ears, our eyes and noses with the dust caught up by that strong wind. Then, in the middle of May, the real heat came. I have been all through the West Indies, to Guatemala and San Salvador, to Panama, Venezuela, and to Brazil, below the equator. But never have I known or felt anything as devastating as that heat in Marrakech. The thermometer on our terrace registered 104° in the shade, and the heat was dry and burning. If one ventured outside, it was as though one were walking straight into a blast furnace, even though you kept in the shade. If you went into the sun, you felt as though you would shrivel as a piece of paper does when it is held beneath a piece of glass and the sun. The very air burned you. You opened your mouth, and the saliva evaporated immediately; your nostrils burned; your eyes felt as though they were burning in their sockets. No one went out during the middle of the day; shops and offices were closed every afternoon until four o'clock, then opened until eight at night. We stayed in the hotel where all the rooms and salons were

darkened, the windows closed, everyone sitting limply, drained of all force and energy.

Poor little Rose-Hélène seemed to wilt before my very eyes. She ran a temperature every day, and had a dysentery which finally was diagnosed as intestinal malaria. There was nothing for her to do; there were no other children in the hotel, she could not go out of doors, she was too young to read, and it was impossible for her to run about and play in the heat which left one gasping and exhausted after the slightest effort. Her fever, slight as it was, and the dysentery weakened her, as did the heat, and the doctors advised me to take her away from Marrakech before the real heat of summer set in, for this, they assured me, was nothing to what would come later on.

But—where to go? There were cool places in the Atlas Mountains, Azrou and Ilfrane, for example, but the hotel accommodations there were limited, all the rooms had been reserved months before, and the cottages were already rented. I tried to get a room at the Grand Hotel in Fedala, thinking it might be nice to go there as we had several friends at that seaside town. But the Grand Hotel had been requisitioned by the Germans. There seemed to be no place we could go to in Morocco where the climate would be healthful for Rose-Hélène, and the doctors continued to urge me to get her away as soon as possible.

Robert had written, about that time, in our code, that he would try to escape at the end of the summer if he had not been released before then. He was sure he would be with us, in one way or another, by September, and he asked me to go back to France, to Toulouse, to wait for him there. I had written him of Rose-Hélène's condition, and had asked him what he thought I ought to do. He had made, he wrote me, certain plans for his escape which he was confident would succeed, and he had reasons for believing that it was quite possible that he might be released before the summer was over. So, influenced by Robert's conviction that he would be able to join us by the end of the summer, and by Rose-Hélène's health, I decided to go back to Toulouse, at least for the summer.

My passport expired in May, and was renewed for two years, with the usual six months' validation clause being put on another page. It was on this passport that Rose-Hélène and I would travel to France—as soon as I had obtained the permit from Vichy to reenter the country. This application was sent to Vichy by Rabat, early in May, and I did not receive the reply until six weeks later. My request had been

granted, which was a surprise, for many French people were refused permission to go to France that summer to visit relatives or friends. The food situation had become so desperate in the free zone that the Government was not anxious to have more people to feed than were already there.

I decided to go direct from Casablanca to Marseille by boat, as that was the simplest and least tiring way of going. The trains from Casablanca to Oran were packed during May, June and July, and one could travel on them only if one had places reserved, which reservations had to be made a full month in advance. I reserved, therefore, a cabin on the June 25th sailing of the *Maréchal Lyautey*, as soon as I decided to leave Morocco, long before my exit permit had been received. It was fortunate that I had made this reservation, for hundreds were refused accommodations on that sailing, and had to wait until the middle of July.

A curious letter came from Thomas Cook's in Casablanca about the middle of May, soon after I had paid for our cabin on the *Maréchal Lyautey*, which reservation I had made through Cook's. They informed me that, since I was an American, and since the United States found itself in a state of war with the Axis powers, it would not be possible for me to sail from Casablanca to France, and I could consider my reservation cancelled. I wrote Cook's immediately for an explanation of this, and one of their representatives called upon me in Marrakech a few days later to tell me what they had not wanted to put in a letter. It seemed that there was a new ruling to the effect that no American could now leave Morocco without the permission of the German Armistice Commission! He said that that might not apply to all foreigners. He was not certain about that, but he knew that it did apply to Americans. I suggested that Cook's take the matter up with the Admiralty at Casablanca since it was they who controlled the shipping in and out of Casablanca, and they would be the ones who would know all about this mysterious ruling which had been given no publicity and which few people had heard of, and nobody understood. The Admiralty, when consulted, explained that the regulation was a recent one which had been imposed by the German Armistice Commission, and it applied only to men. So Rose-Hélène and I were exempt from the ruling, and were free to sail, as planned, on the *Maréchal Lyautey*.

We Cross the Pyrenees

I

WE sailed, then, on the *Maréchal Lyautey* on June 25th from Casablanca for Marseille. We had bought a small traveling cage for Sidi, and a large supply of grain, for we knew we would find none for him in France. But the poor little bird was so terrified on the train going to Casablanca, I feared he would have a heart attack during the long journey from Marseille to Toulouse. So I reluctantly decided that Sidi would have to be left behind in Morocco. It was a difficult moment when I had to break the news to Rose-Hélène that her little canary, of whom she had grown very fond, could not go with us to France. But, after a few bitter tears, we said good-bye to Sidi and went down to the docks to get on the boat.

The *Maréchal Lyautey* was a comfortable ship of about eight thousand tons and she sailed with a passenger list of seven hundred, of whom five hundred were children! Many of the women were returning to France for the birth of new babies that summer. There were very few men on the boat as Frenchmen of the army, navy or air forces who were going to France on leave had to go by way of Oran. We were sailing in convoy and nothing of a military character could be on any of the ships in the convoy. Little did I think, little did any of us think, as we steamed out of Casablanca harbor that June day, that, four-and-a-half months later, there would be fighting there between Americans and French naval forces. Rose Hélène and I stood at the rail, looking at the battleships and destroyers in the harbor and at Casablanca, and I wondered when we would see that white city again. I did not regret leaving Morocco, but I did hope that Rose-Hélène and I would be able to go back there some day after the war, with Robert, when the atmosphere would be more normal and we could enjoy, together, the natural beauties of that country.

It took us six days to go from Casablanca to Marseille, for our ship naturally had to go as slowly as the slowest freighter in the convoy. We were a group of about eight ships, of which ours was the largest, and we were escorted by a small destroyer, several times smaller than we were. It was an arrogant little boat; it puffed importantly along beside us although we wondered, as we peered at it, far below us, what it could do to protect us in case of attack. We really hoped, most of us, for a little excitement; not too much, because of the children and pregnant women, but a little, just to see what our escort would and could do.

We followed the coast all the way, sometimes going so close to shore I wondered why we did not run aground. We followed, first the French then the Spanish Moroccan coasts—we went past Larache so close to the shore I could see Lizette's villa plainly. We passed Tangiers, with Gibraltar on our left. We could see The Rock—which was subjected to a heavy bombing attack the very night after we had passed it, we learned afterward. The only excitement we had on the trip occurred when we were passing through the Straits of Gibraltar. It was a fine day—in fact each one of the six days was a rare, perfect, June day, with bright sun and blue sky and the sea as calm as the proverbial millpond. We were steaming slowly through the Straits when two English destroyers came out to look us over. They were much larger than our little escort which, however, promptly detached itself from the convoy and followed the Royal Navy destroyers on their tour of inspection around us. We all leaned over the rail watching with great interest, many of the French passengers waving at the English officers when they thought no one on our ship was looking. After two turns around our convoy, with our little mascot (it was more than an escort) close behind, the English ships decided we were not dangerous or even interesting, and they went away, the faithful French destroyer trailing after them until it was certain that they were departing. Then it came back to us and we could almost see it wagging its tail ingratiatingly and shaking itself, looking to us for a word of approval or affection, like a shepherd dog which has driven off some menace to its flock.

II

When Rose-Hélène and I disembarked at Marseille on July first, I did so with no enthusiasm. The mental attitude of the French in the

free zone had depressed me ten months before; they, as well as the French in Morocco, had seemed blind or obtuse as regards what was going on in Vichy and happening to their country. I did not look forward to living in that atmosphere, and I knew the food problem was going to be a difficult one. But the climate in Toulouse would be better for Rose-Hélène than the Moroccan, and I looked forward hopefully to the autumn when Robert should be with us.

We spent a few days in Marseille, at the Hotel de Noailles. Robert had a cousin living near Marseille whom I wanted to see and I wanted to rest before taking the long train journey to Toulouse. The food situation there was appalling, meals even in the best restaurants being very poor and frightfully expensive. Electricity was severely rationed; the current was shut off in the hotel between 10 A.M. and 7:30 P.M., which meant that the elevators did not run between those hours. When they did operate, they made no stops before the fifth floor. We were on the fourth floor and had 110 steps to climb each time we went up to our room. Many people on that floor took the elevator to the fifth floor and walked down a flight, but the hotel manager learned of this system and put a stop to it. Linen and cotton goods were not to be found in the shops, even with the required points. A friend of mine in Marseille, in desperate need of sheets and towels, found four second-hand cotton sheets for which she paid fifteen dollars each, and some small hand towels, Woolworth variety and also second-hand, paying one dollar and fifty cents each for those.

We went, upon our arrival in Toulouse, to spend a few days with tante Odile to work out with her the question of where to spend the summer. A happy solution was found in Les Marroniers, a small cottage on tante Odile's estate, which she offered to rent to me. It had been a farmhouse, but she had remodeled and furnished it for her daughter Martine who had lived there with her children after the death of her husband, until the war had made it necessary for Martine to go and live with her mother and to join forces with tante Odile in the campaign for food. Les Marroniers had since been rented, but would be free on August first and Rose-Hélène and I could have it if we wished. I walked over to look at it and found it to be an attractive and comfortable little house with three bedrooms and bath upstairs, living room, dining room, kitchen, two maids' rooms, and a guest room which would serve as a play room for Rose-Hélène, down stairs. Its chief disadvantage was the fact that it was two-and-a-half miles from town and I would

have to walk at least five miles whenever I wanted to go to Toulouse as there was no bus service in that direction. And, even if I could have found the courage and intelligence to learn to ride a bicycle, there were none to be had in Toulouse unless one happened to hear of someone who was willing to sell his. You could occasionally find a second-hand bicycle for seventy-five or a hundred dollars, but you could never hope to find tires for it when those which were on it were worn out. Then, although there was a telephone, and electricity in the house, there was no gas; there was only a wood stove for cooking. Wood was rationed, one-third of a cord a month being allowed to a family our size (Rose-Hélène and I and the two servants I would have). It was thought that I could manage on that and, if not, I could resort to the black market where wood could be bought at forty dollars a cord, uncut. These disadvantages were more than offset by the fact that it would be an ideal place for Rose-Hélène to live, in the pure fresh country air, and in the tranquillity of our own home. After nearly a year of the enervating climate of Morocco, and of living in hotels, I felt that Rose-Hélène was entitled to a summer in the country; we could not stay at Les Marronniers for the winter, unless Robert were with us. But winter was five or six months off, there was no use thinking about that just then, and, besides, Robert *would* be with us, and it would be nice for him to have a home to come to when he was released or had made his escape as he surely would be or do before winter came. So I agreed to take the house from the first of August, and we went to a hotel while waiting for Les Marronniers to be made ready for us. It would not have been fair to spend those three weeks with tante Odile, for the food restrictions were so severe, it was all she and Martine could do to find enough to feed themselves and Martine's two growing children.

Rose-Hélène and I were hungry; perpetually, everlastingly hungry during those three weeks we spent at the best hotel in Toulouse. Here are a few examples of what was served for lunch or dinner there at the hotel in July, 1942:

MONDAY LUNCH: a few slices of tomatoes for hors d'oeuvres: one thin slice of beef, nothing into which one could get one's teeth; boiled carrots which had a bouillon sauce poured over them in a vain effort to give them some taste; and a peach.

MONDAY DINNER: tepid, tasteless soup; stringy beans; braised celery; rice pudding, sweetened with saccharine.

TUESDAY DINNER: one slice each of stuffed egg plant, braised celery, peach.

SUNDAY LUNCH: cold navy beans for hors d'oeuvres; one thin slice of veal each; one boiled potato each; a peach.

SUNDAY DINNER: the usual tasteless soup, half of stuffed tomato, boiled lettuce—a peach. Rose-Hélène detests cooked lettuce, so all she had for this meal was the soup, which had no nourishing ingredients, and a whole stuffed tomato, for I gave her my half, and the usual peach.

These are typical of the meals which were served day in and day out. Guests were driven to bringing to the table whatever extra food they had been able to find outside. You would see dignified ladies and austere gentlemen arriving in the dining room with covered dishes, and with small shopping bags which would be deposited on the floor beside the table and from which would triumphantly be produced whatever morsels of food they had been able to find in the market—black or legitimate. One lady even brought some onions with her to her table—goodness only knew where she had found that rarity—and peeled them there, her eyes streaming but there was an expression of consummate bliss on her face. Social customs and conventions were flung to the winds. The only thing that mattered was to get enough to eat; it was of no importance where you ate it. With food tucked away in cupboards and closets in all the rooms of the hotel, the mice, of course, had a field day—or night. Every night they could be heard, gnawing, scratching, scampering everywhere and too often one would find, in the morning, only a few crumbs.

We had hot water only from noon on Saturday until noon on Sunday. What an orgy of baths we indulged in during those twenty-four hours! Rose-Hélène and I were constantly popping in and out of the tub, and we invited tante Odile and Martine and the two children to come and share the luxury of a hot bath with us.

Many rooms of the hotel were requisitioned by German officers of the Armistice Commission. One or two other hotels in Toulouse had been entirely requisitioned for the exclusive use of members of the Armistice Commission and officials of the Gestapo, but only the higher ranking officers were at our hotel and one member of the Gestapo, so a number of rooms were available for ordinary guests. I was given a

room which belonged to a French general who, with his wife, was away on holiday. I learned, a week or so after I had been there, that the adjoining room—which connected with mine—was occupied by the one Gestapo official. Rose-Hélène and I had to be very careful not to say anything those listening ears might enjoy hearing and I never felt comfortable or safe after I knew who was on the other side of the thin wall which divided our rooms.

The Germans did not eat in the main dining room, as they had done in Marrakech; they had their own private dining room. The table which Rose-Hélène and I had was in a corner near the door, a door which the waiters had to pass to carry the steaming trays to the Germans' dining room. As I sniffed these trays and saw what was on them, I realized why the Germans did not wish—or dare—to eat with the half-starved French guests of the hotel, and I understood why they all looked so well-fed, when we all had lean and hungry looks. They not only got the largest quantity and the best quality of what was to be found in Toulouse to eat, but they saw that Toulouse contributed her share of what had to be sent to Germany. There were plenty of vegetables to be seen growing and being picked on the farms and in the large vegetable gardens around the city, but none, or very few, reached the markets or the tables of the French.

We were very glad when the first of August came and we could move into our little home. I had found a nice couple to take care of us; Marie, the cook, had a bicycle and could go in to town for the marketing and Charles could chop the wood, build the fires and make himself useful in many other ways. Our food problems were not, by any means, solved, but we did manage to get more to eat in our own home than we had had in the hotel—and what we did have tasted far better. These were the rations we were allowed during August, 1942:

- slightly more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of a pound of meat a week
- $\frac{1}{5}$ of a pound of cheese a month
- 1 pound of sugar a month
- 4 ounces of oil a month
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of butter
- 2 ounces of margarine. No spaghetti, macaroni, noodles
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of rice per month for children under 6
- 4 ounces of bread a day
- 4 quarts of wine a month

1 ounce of pure coffee a month, or $\frac{1}{4}$ of a pound of coffee mixed
with other ingredients or $\frac{1}{2}$ of a pound of chicory
 $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of chocolate per month for children under 6
 $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of chocolate per month for children between the ages of
6 and 14

We were allowed one egg every three months. One chicken a year was the ration for a family of four or more persons; smaller families were allotted a pigeon, one a year. We were supposed to have two pounds of potatoes a month, but rarely did. They were scarcely ever seen, although in August there was a distribution of six pounds per person; the people were overwhelmed by the generosity of the Germans in allowing them so many of their own potatoes! In September, however, there was no distribution at all. Chestnuts came along about that time and they were our staple article of food as long as they lasted. They were also rationed; everyone who had chestnut trees on his property was obliged to gather the chestnuts and take them to the municipal centre where they were measured and the ration for that period determined. Those individuals who had sold their chestnuts bought them back at the same price they had been paid for them, but they received in quantity a few pounds rather than the bushels they had taken to the municipal store.

Many people began keeping a few chickens, for the eggs, and rabbits, for the food, but chickens and rabbits had their ration cards as did the human beings and their rations were so scant the hens laid very few eggs. If you kept a pig, as many people did, to fatten up for winter meat, and to get a bit of bacon which no one otherwise had, and extra grease, you were obliged to report to the City Hall that you owned a pig. When the time came to kill the animal, this had to be announced to the City Hall and someone was sent, within a few days, to weigh the creature and tell you whether or not you could slaughter it. If it were not fat enough, you had to wait until it reached the required weight and then send, once more, for the inspector. When piggy was in shape to be slaughtered, permission would be given for his demise and a note taken of his weight. This weight was duly recorded on your ration *dossier* at the City Hall and thereafter, for one full year, a proportionate amount was deducted from the meat ration of every member of your family and household. That rather discouraged people from keeping pigs, for there never were scraps from the dining room table or kitchen

to give the hungry animals and it was difficult to find enough to feed them to bring them up to the desired weight. Then, you did eat well for a few months after the pig had been killed, but for months after he had been entirely eaten and had become only a memory, you had scarcely any meat at all to eat—because you had eaten not wisely but too well at the beginning of the year.

Of course there was always the black market to resort to when one got really desperate, but the prices were nearly prohibitive and I had made it a rule in our household that we were to get along on what could be found in the ordinary market, both for pecuniary and moral reasons. Butter, for instance, cost twenty-five cents a pound, normally, and \$2.50 a pound black market. Pepper was also \$2.50 a pound, B.M. For honey, one paid \$1.75 a pound when one could get it; there was no legal price for this. We got so tired of eating only peaches and an occasional apple for dessert, I bought a canteloupe one day and paid \$1.25 for it. It was the only one I saw all summer, so I was not tempted more than that once.

Some typical menus of those days at Les Marroniers were:

MONDAY LUNCH: one stuffed tomato each (stuffed with the crumbs of black bread), carrots, and a raw apple.

FOR DINNER: pumpkin soup; a gruel made of the bird seed I had brought from Morocco which, being millet, is a grain humans can and do eat in France now whenever they can get it; lettuce salad with a dash of vinegar and salt and pepper, no oil; and grapes.

TUESDAY LUNCH: boiled leeks, string beans and a peach.

FOR DINNER: pumpkin soup once more; boiled macaroni (I had brought several packages of macaroni, spaghetti and noodles from Morocco, being allowed to take with me from there fifty pounds of food-stuffs); some vegetable the name of which I cannot remember. This vegetable had been given to cattle, but its nutritive value for human beings had suddenly been discovered and the cattle had to look about for something to take its place. And a raw apple.

Rose-Hélène's ration of milk was the same as in Paris, one-and-a-quarter pints a day, some of which was lost in the boiling. That was sufficient for her breakfast and her mid-afternoon snack, but there was none for our household needs, so I bought a goat.

She was a friendly, gentle nanny goat, and would keep us company

and give us the extra milk we badly needed. I learned to milk Nellie and was very proud of the accomplishment. It was my self-imposed duty to milk her at seven-thirty every evening, and sometimes, as a special treat, Rose-Hélène was allowed to stay up to watch this fascinating performance. Usually, however, she was in bed by seven. We had our suppers together at six-thirty, neither of us caring to eat alone and we enjoyed our companionable evening meals, even though there was not much to eat. Then Rose-Hélène would be popped into bed, I would hurry her through her prayers—"Do hurry now, darling, for you know I must go out to milk Nellie."

One day, I was going through my trunks and Rose-Hélène spied a pair of evening slippers. She has always had a passion for shoes. These slippers were rose satin, with very high heels, and rhinestone buckles. She snatched them up in delight. When, she asked me, did I wear them, she had never seen them on my feet. I told her they were to wear when I went out in the evening. "Oh, when you go out to milk Nellie?" she inquired, with such pristine innocence, I hugged her. What a graphic comment upon the kind of life I was then leading!

I bought a little guinea pig, too, as a pet. I wanted Rose-Hélène to know and be kind to animals. I had begun teaching her a little English by that time and instead of calling the new pet in French, *cochon d'inde*, I called it the guinea pig. This Rose-Hélène tried to imitate, but the nearest she could come to it was pinny big, which name I liked much better than guinea pig and our pinny big was never called anything but that.

Then we got a little yellow kitten, Minou, to take the place of the little yellow Sidi whom we still mourned. Minou was a dear little cat. She began catching mice when she was still a baby, and when she was only a few months old, we found her in the kitchen one evening, cornering a rat twice her size. Despite her ferocity with rodents, she was gentle and affectionate with us. She and Rose-Hélène used to play hide-and-seek out of doors. Rose-Hélène would hide behind one of the big trees in the yard, Minou would crouch on the other side, waggle her rear and then dash around the tree at Rose-Hélène, mewing "Tag" and Rose-Hélène would run for the goal with Minou bounding after her. This game would go on for hours, and it did my heart good to watch them, to see my child in a normal, healthful atmosphere, living the kind of life a child should live. She had no children to play with, those of our friends who had children lived too far away, and I had

no way of getting to their homes. But Rose-Hélène was happy playing alone with her Minou and the pinny big and a new doll. We used to go for walks along the lonely, quiet, country road, Minou skipping along after us, following us like a dog, Rose-Hélène and I still the "two little comrades." At just past four, Rose-Hélène had ceased to be my baby and had become a friend and comrade with whom I could talk about the things that interested, or sometimes worried me. She nearly always found the one thing to say to make me feel better as, for example, the time I had received a letter from Robert which had made me rather unhappy. He had written me in one of his rare moments of profound depression and his letter was so full of despair and gloom, I was rather quiet for some time after I had read it. Rose-Hélène, noticing that something was wrong, asked me what the trouble was. I told her I had received a letter from Papa which had made me unhappy. "I don't know why he writes letters like that," I added miserably. "*Sans doute,*" said my little daughter, going without hesitation to the heart of the matter, "undoubtedly it is because being a prisoner makes him nervous." Obviously that was the answer and one I should have thought of myself.

I subscribed for the summer to the newspaper *Journal de Genève*, to get the news from a neutral source, and to read a paper that afforded one some pleasure to read, from a cultural as well as from a political standpoint. The few newspapers available in the free zone were, most of them, flagrantly pro-German. *Gringoire* was disgustingly so, also the illustrated papers *7 Jours* and *Dimanche Illustré*. The local paper was a farce. So I depended upon the Geneva paper for my news, but early in October, Swiss newspapers were banned in unoccupied France. This was a disappointment and a deprivation to many people, for the Geneva newspapers had a wide circulation in Free France. But someone—we were not told who—had decided that those Swiss papers were not "neutral" enough—neutral on the side of Germany, that is to say—so we no longer had the pleasure of reading them.

There was an interesting advertisement in a Paris newspaper, *Le Matin*, in September. Translated, it read: "The MOTORIZED CORPS OF THE LUFTWAFFE ENGAGES FRENCHMEN. The motorized corps of the Luftwaffe accepts in its ranks Frenchmen, aged from eighteen to fifty years, having national ideas, and who are ready to aid in the edification of the new Europe. Priority is given to chauffeurs and former soldiers. Information will be furnished at the enlistment Bureau of the N.S.K.K. Motorgruppe Luftwaffe, rue Godot-de-Mauroy." An-

other advertisement which appeared almost daily in the French newspapers was the following:

WE ARE SEEKING FOR GERMANY

under the most beneficial conditions, repair mechanics, turners of all sorts, boiler makers, fitters, foundry workers, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, millers, shipbuilders, masons, carpenters, joiners, laborers, workers for all kinds of fortifications and engineering work of or in the earth, skilled laborers of all sorts, electricians, chauffeurs, women factory workers, maids-of-all-work, and cooks

Apply

GERMAN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY

It would appear from the above comprehensive list that Germany was lacking labor on all the home fronts. The Toulouse German employment office which was on the street floor, had its windows broken so often, it eventually had to change its quarters to an office on the second floor.

We never were told the actual figures of the *relève*, as the French called the exchange between prisoners of war in Germany and the workers who volunteered to take their places. For that is what most of the men who went to Germany thought they were doing. Many of them had brothers who had been, for two years, imprisoned in Germany, or close friends or relatives. These men felt that by offering their own services they might be responsible for the release of a prisoner they knew. But we never knew the ratio between the Frenchmen who went to Germany and those who came back; we saw in the papers and cinemas, pictures of trainloads of men just departing for Germany, greeting trainloads of men just returning from there, and the captions gave one the impression that those who were leaving were heroes and martyrs who were making this sacrifice for the men in the other train who were coming back to France. There were, it is true, some who went because of the allure of the high wages offered to workers in Germany, and the compensation given to their families left at home. But there were few who went because they had a desire to work for the "edification of the New Europe," or who even realized that they were doing so. Robert had no illusions about this scheme; he wrote me that his parents had been completely taken in by it, and he was glad to see, by my letters, that I saw the situation in its true light. He said that, out of the fifty thousand prisoners in his camp, one thousand had been re-

leased and most of those men were old, or in ill health. He told me not to pin my hopes for his release on the *relève* but to continue my efforts for his liberation in other directions and he would do the same.

I went one afternoon with tante Odile to a tea given by a friend of hers. Everyone had been invited a week in advance and we had looked forward to that Tuesday as a child does to Christmas, all of us thinking about what we would be given to eat. We did not wonder what to wear, we knew too well what each and every one of us would wear; none of us had many dresses and those we had were shabby. We did not wonder who would be there, that did not interest us. The only thing that did interest us was—Food. Madame G net had the reputation of being able to manage to find things that no one else ever found, and we never knew how she did it. We arrived early, but found the salon already filled with other guests. The ladies, gentle people, all of them, sat there, trying to talk, to chatter gaily and failing miserably in the attempt. Their eyes—mine too—kept straying toward the door where we knew the maid would appear with the tea tray and the plates of food. When she did appear—the expressions on all of our faces made me want to cry. I tried not to look at my friends, I tried to eat slowly, pretending to myself that I was not hungry, and remembering what the tea hour used to be—a sympathetic and charming reunion of friends over the tea cups. It was charming no more. It was ugly, heartbreaking. Everyone made comments on what was served: “How delicious this is! There must be butter in this”—with an admiring yet envious glance at the hostess. “There is white flour in this”—a knowing look cast in the direction of the proud hostess. No one asked where the dab of butter or the spoonful of flour had come from, that was not done, but everyone wondered. We ate, sipped the herb tea, or the chocolate made with water and sweetened with saccharine, talked about the food then being eaten, and the problem of the daily marketing and of finding clothing, we thanked our hostess, said good-bye to the other guests, and departed. That is a tea in poor France today.

III

It is heartrending to see a vanquished country trying to carry on, to see her people, babies, children, old folks, everyone, paying bitterly for that defeat. The French children were pitiful. Their faces were

pinched with hunger, their complexions sallow and gray. Their little arms and legs seemed always to be covered with bandages. I asked a doctor why this was so and he told me that the cuts, abrasions and scratches a child gets from its frequent falls and minor accidents do not heal in these French children who have been deprived for two years of vitamins, minerals, proteins, carbohydrates and fats. Their resistance is so low, the slightest scratch becomes infected and does not heal. It was a sight to draw tears to one's eyes to see children coming out of school. They did not rush out, screaming and shouting as happy children do when they are let out of school; these children walked out soberly and turned their steps toward home, having neither the strength nor the desire to run or shout. A hungry child is not a happy child. And a hungry people is a beaten people. Hitler realizes that fact too well. He knows that when men and women are hungry, they have neither the wish nor the will to fight. They have neither the physical strength nor the moral courage to do more than the French people are doing today—keeping themselves alive. They are anaesthetized by hunger, propaganda and fatigue. Their capacities seem to have become atrophied, except those they need in their struggle to survive, not politically, but physically; not merely as Frenchmen, but as human beings. They have no time to think about the past, no inclination to think of the future. The terrible present is the only problem they have the strength to deal with. I had been irritated with them, the year before, by their refusal or their inability to see what was happening to them and their country. I could not be irritated with them then in 1942, for their despair was so profound, their fatigue so great, their hunger so ravenous, they were incapable of seeing or understanding anything but their own misery. They do want to be freed, but they can do nothing alone. They need to be understood, and they need to be helped. They stand, those patient, weary people, rich and poor alike, in long food lines, hour after hour, day after day, and there they will stand until they are delivered by men with arms, and men with food. Then and then only will they, can they, rise and strike down their hated Nazi oppressors. They cannot rise alone.

One used to see groups of carefree, laughing people at the sidewalk cafés in France. There aren't even smiles on the faces of the French people today. France is still a nation of mourning. In mourning for her defeat; for those who have been killed in the war; for the 1,063,000 of her finest young men who are still held, prisoners of war, in Germany.

Dancing is not allowed; evening dress is not permitted. There are no pleasures, few distractions. There were movies, but in August a ban was placed on the exhibition of Anglo-Saxon films. No more American or English movies. The people became so tired of the propaganda films which were being shown them under the guise of entertainment, they preferred to stay at home. So even that last amusement was taken from them.

Here in the United States, we have rationing and restrictions, but we have them to help us win the war. There is hope in our hearts for our future; there is confidence that victory will be ours. But the French and the people of other defeated countries in Europe are going without food that their conquerors may eat. Their privations are of a drab, hopeless sort, not weapons of victory as are our own. The war is over in France. France is vanquished, but she still is living on a war-time basis. She is not at war, but she has no peace. That is her tragedy.

The textile problem was another serious one in France. Adults were allowed twenty points a year, and children forty. To illustrate what one could buy with twenty points: I had a coat which needed a new lining (there was no question of being able to get a new coat). After searching for weeks, in all the shops in Toulouse, I finally found some navy blue material which was called silk, which would be suitable for a lining. I needed three meters and I had to give ten points a meter. I recklessly used my twenty points for the year and took ten of Rose-Hélène's forty points and, *voilà*, I had used my entire ration for the year and a quarter of Rose-Hélène's just for a coat lining! These points were needed to buy any kind of textile—silk or woollen material for clothes, spools of thread or darning cotton, handkerchiefs, bed or table linen, towels, fabric gloves, stockings—everything. Silk or rayon stockings, however, were almost impossible to find. If you were so fortunate as to find a pair, you paid \$7.50 for them and you could not expect them to last longer than a month. There were no more leather shoes to be found in the shops—but these, like everything else, could be had in the black market if one wanted to pay the equivalent of thirty or forty dollars for quite ordinary shoes. Half-soleing was being done in wood by that time. At home, gas was severely rationed for cooking, and electric current as well. If we exceeded our month's ration of electricity for the month, we were heavily fined, up to a certain number of kilowatt hours. If our consumption went beyond a certain point, the meter was taken out and we had no more electricity.

And so the summer passed, with its rations, restrictions and privations. I did not go out even one evening during all that time—three and a half months—nor did anyone come to see me, as we were so far from town and the road was lonely and dark and no one cared about riding along there on a bicycle at night. I walked into town at least once a week, for I was obliged to sign in the police register every Thursday. All foreigners were subject to this regulation. Often I had to slosh five miles through a driving rain, just to sign my name in that wretched book. It had to be done on Thursdays; Wednesday evening or Friday morning would not do and I cursed that order more than once, when I was in town the day before or after, having had to go in on that particular day for our ration cards for that month, and not being allowed to register, had to make another trip the next day.

I had no intimate friend in Toulouse, no one with whom I could talk about the things that really interested me, no one who shared my ideas or convictions concerning the war or the post-war world. I had no cultural interests, nothing to read but the books I could find in the local bookshops. So many books were unobtainable, due, not only to the shortage of paper, but to the number of books which had been placed on the black list. I did read Stendhal's *Le Rouge et Le Noir*, and the memory of the pleasant hours I spent under the trees reading that magnificent novel is a very pleasant one. When I watched my child turning somersaults in the grass near me, and playing with her kitten and pinny big, when I saw her growing like a weed, getting brown and hard (but not plump, it was impossible to gain weight on our regime) I felt fully compensated for my long, lonely evenings and rather arid days. If Robert should come back—*when* he came back—I would ask for nothing more than this, our attractive little house and my husband and baby. Food restrictions and all, we could be happy in our reunion and in each other, all three, at Les Marroniers until we could go back to L'Ormeau.

As the summer waned, I wondered vaguely where Rose-Hélène and I would go for the winter if Robert did not return by October or November. We should have to leave Les Marroniers, that I knew. We could not spend the winter there alone. Marie could not bicycle so far every day to do the marketing, in the cold, the snow and the wind, and the allotment of one third of a cord of wood a month would not be sufficient to keep us warm. Where, then, would we go, Rose-Hélène and I?

IV

Then, in early September, I received a letter from Robert which shook me out of my torpor and made me realize that I now would have to bend my mind actively to this problem of our winter plans. For Robert wrote that there was, after all, very little chance of his being released during 1942, that he saw no way of effecting the escape he had hoped to make, and he did not want Rose-Hélène and me to spend a fourth winter alone in France. It would make him desperately unhappy to think of us, living under the conditions which would exist in France the coming winter, the food situation would be worse than it was then, worse than it had ever been, and we would suffer from the cold. He had given the matter deep and serious thought and he had come to the conclusion that I ought to try to get a permit from Vichy to go to the United States for six months to spend the winter in my country with Rose-Hélène, where I would renew my courage and moral strength, and Rose-Hélène improve her health. Then we could return to France in the spring, by which time he surely would be free. The thought of our being so far away from him pained him dreadfully, but it would make him even more unhappy to think of his wife and baby as being hungry and cold, thinly clad and shabbily dressed. He would be comforted by the knowledge that we were going, not permanently, but only for the winter, and that both Rose-Hélène and I would benefit enormously from our six months in the United States. This suggestion came as a complete surprise to me, for I did not suppose that Robert would ever consent to our going so far away from him.

I considered the question for several days, weighing its pros and cons. It would obviously be to Rose-Hélène's advantage and mine to spend some months in my country which appeared to me, from my vantage point there in France, to be a land flowing with milk and honey. The very thought of all I could do in New York, thrilled me. How happy I would be to see and talk with my friends once more. I would be able to live, for a few months, the only way of life I had ever wanted to live, the way I wanted to teach my child to prefer. I had always wished that the stepping stones of her education could be trod in America; I wanted her first concepts, the foundation of her education and of her cultural and moral consciousness, to be formed in my country, not in France. But I never had supposed I would have the opportunity of giving her this privilege, although I had always intended that she

should live in the United States between the ages of fourteen and eighteen as she is required by our laws to do, in order to retain her American citizenship. But by that time, her character would have been fairly well formed and her mind would be less flexible, less absorbent than at four-and-a-half. I felt I ought not to let this opportunity pass; the prospect of going home was tempting and alluring from that and from many other angles—and there was the knowledge that we would EAT, really eat again. But—how could I bear to leave my husband after having fought to stay near him for three years?

That was the chief *con*, but there was the added one of our not having any money in America. I could buy enough dollars from the Banque de France to pay our expenses over, but I would be allowed to take no more than that out of France, and everything we had was in France. I would have to work in America, to take care of Rose-Hélène and myself for those six months, but that was not a displeasing prospect—on the contrary, I would like to do something for the war effort. I had a small score of my own to settle with the Germans, in any case, for what they had done to mess up our own little lives, to say nothing of what they had done to ruin millions of other lives. Apart from the necessity of earning money, I would be glad, and proud, to contribute to the war effort of my country after having been on the taking and disagreeable end of the war for three years. Having witnessed France's defeat, I would enjoy working for my own country's victory, which would also mean the liberation of France—and my husband.

Rose-Hélène, of course, noticed my abstraction during those days. She wanted to know what the trouble was, and I told her. I explained to her, Papa's idea that we should go to America, and showed her, on a map, where that place was. Her first remark was that it looked pretty far from where Papa was, and her second was a query as to whether she could take Minou with her if we should go. On the whole, she was against the idea when I told her I feared that it was too long a journey for Minou to take; she could not imagine what there could be on the other side of the big ocean to compete with Minou and Papa in attractiveness; she believed she preferred to stay where she was. However, a few days later she saw that my mind was still troubled; it always distressed her to see me unhappy; her own problems and worries did not bother her nearly as much as Mama's did. She endured, far more easily, her own pain than she did anyone's else sufferings; she was extremely sensitive for others, not at all for herself. This day she said,

"Pauvre petite Maman, malheureuse; poor unhappy little Mama. Don't worry, we will go to America." She add, comfortingly, "And don't be afraid, Mama, I will go with you."

So, Robert was urging me to go, Rose-Hélène had promised to go with me and we would be coming back in the spring—perhaps we *would* go. Perhaps Vichy would not grant me the *aller et retour* for six months. I would let them make my decision. I would make the demand to leave France, and I would ask for permission to return in six months. If the *retour* part were granted, we would go; if it were refused, we would stay. Having come to that conclusion, I felt much better, for the decision would not actually be mine; I would let my actions be guided by Vichy's reply to my demand. I filled out my application at the city hall, the demand was sent to Vichy about the middle of September, and I settled down once more to wait. Everyone told me that the chances were ten to one against my being granted the *retour* permit, as Vichy was not extending such courtesies to foreigners those days, and particularly not to Americans. France was trying to get as many people as possible out of the country, and not letting any come in.

In October, I received a letter from Robert in which he told me that his Oflag was completely disorganized; nearly half the fifty thousand men were being turned out to do work in various parts of Germany. Robert had always refused to volunteer for work of any kind, but this time the prisoners were not consulted as to their wishes, they were herded together and told they had to go. It was explained that they would be back in the camp within two or three weeks, that there was some emergency work to be done. A little later, he wrote that he had been sent to clear up the wreckage in a large seaport city near his camp, which had been bombed by the R.A.F. He added, "We all enjoyed our work very much and hope we shall have more of it to do." And that passed the censor of his camp!

After that work had been done, they were sent to dig potatoes. Those fields covered acres and acres, and the prisoners worked from seven in the morning until seven at night, with only a half hour's rest at noon. Working in the fields with them, he said, were German women, widows, mostly, or mothers and sisters of men at the front. Nearly every one among them had lost some loved one on the Russian front and they all seemed melancholy and depressed. "We shall be glad to be back in our camp, where there are smiles to be seen—that which one does not see in the big city of Z—or in the fields among the hundreds of women.

In the camp, among the prisoners, the morale is good; outside, among the German civilian population, it is very low. We feel more encouraged than ever, since this little sortie, and more than ever confident that the war cannot continue much longer, for the German people obviously have had enough of it." That, too, passed the censor, although Robert did express himself in more or less equivocal terms. He wrote that what had given him much joy was that he had seen a child, a little girl. He had heard her talk, and laugh, and sing. The first child he had seen, the first he had heard a child's voice for two years and four months. That, he said, was almost the greatest deprivation among the fathers of Oflag XIX-Y.

October 21st, the reply came from Vichy. The *permis d'aller et retour* for six months had been granted! I had supposed that, being an American, I was *persona non grata* in France, and had never believed that I would be granted the right to return, once I had left the country. But here it was, the French permission for us to go home for a visit, and to return in the spring! The next thing, then, was to get the money for the trip.

I learned, at the *Banque de France*, that I could buy enough dollars at the official rate of 43.75 francs to the dollar to pay our passage to America, and I could buy escudos at the official rate of 2.75 francs to an escudo, and pesetas at the official rate also—enough for the journey to Lisbon. I made an application, therefore, for one thousand two hundred dollars and deposited with the *Banque de France*, the francs to cover this amount. I was told that it would be ten days before the permit would come from Chatelguyon for the Bank to sell me the foreign money, but, meanwhile, I could be applying for my Portuguese and my Spanish visa.

Now that I had decided to go—or, rather, since Vichy had made the decision for me—I had to hurry, as my passport validation expired November 18th and I did not want to have any more passport difficulties. The Portuguese visa was not an easy one to obtain; many people had waited two and three months for one. I wrote to Mr. Miller at the American Consulate at Lisbon, however, to tell him that I had decided to go to America. Could he help me to get my Portuguese visa? Since he had been trying, for three years, to persuade me to return to the United States, he was delighted that I was at last ready and willing to go and, in some way, he managed to secure the authorization at Lisbon for the Portuguese Consul at Toulouse to grant me my visa. The Spanish

visa was granted automatically when one could produce another visa to prove that one would be passing through Spain only in transit, so, by the beginning of November, I had my two visas, my exit permit from France, and the permit to return. The only thing now lacking was money, but being certain that I would have that by Saturday, November 7th, I reserved a sleeping compartment for that day from the station on the Spanish border, through to Lisbon, and I made all my arrangements to leave Toulouse on that day.

When it was learned, in Toulouse, that I was leaving for America, I was besieged by requests to take messages to friends and relatives in the United States, and queries as to whether I had anything I could sell. After all, everyone pleaded, I was going to America, where there was everything, I would not have to take very much with me. They would buy anything, everything I had. Everyone had plenty of money, there was nothing to spend it on, there was nothing to buy in any of the shops and even the stocks of the black markets were becoming depleted. I was not especially anxious to sell anything, for I could not take the money with me and I could easily have stored what I did not wish to take to America, with tante Odile. But it seemed selfish to do that when my friends could use and enjoy what I had while I was gone. So I sold my radio, a short-wave model which could no longer be obtained in France, a number of golf balls, the electric stove with two plaques which I sold at the same price I had paid for it three months before (twenty-five dollars), and what linen I had with me. Heavy linen sheets at twenty-five dollars a pair, linen sheets for a child's bed at five dollars each, table napkins at one dollar and a quarter each, and other linen at proportionate prices which were considered to be extremely fair and modest. These were bought, not to use as table or bed linen, but to be cut up and made into dresses and underwear. The sheets would do beautifully for that, the purchasers said with delight, and the small scraps of the finer linen could be made into handkerchiefs, of which there were no more to be had.

Les Marronniers had been rented to someone else, in anticipation of our departure, from the first of November. Our application for money having been made on October 22nd, the permit should have arrived by Monday, November 2nd, so Rose-Hélène and I moved to tante Odile's on Saturday, expecting to spend our last week with her. But the permit did not come on Monday, nor on Tuesday, as expected. I became somewhat uneasy and went to the bank on Wednesday, November 4th, to

find out what was wrong. I told them that I had made my plans to leave on Saturday, and it would be most annoying if the money had not come before then; it would necessitate a complete change of my plans, cancellation of the sleeping-car reservations which were not too easy to get, as travel to Spain and Portugal was very heavy those days. The clerk who was taking care of my application said he could not understand why the permit had not yet been granted, and promised to telephone Chatelguyon to find out what was wrong.

On Thursday I was told that the office of exchange at Chatelguyon had said that, since I had made a demand for a larger sum than was usually asked for, the permission to sell that amount had to come from the Minister of Finance at Vichy and no reply had as yet come from that office, but it might come at any hour. By Friday, the 6th, the reply still had not come but, on the chance that it would arrive by the afternoon mail, I went to the police station and had my exit visa for Toulouse stamped on my passport. One of the gendarmes asked me why I was leaving for America. "We don't want you to leave," he said, "we would prefer that your compatriots come over here—why don't they come?" and he looked at his confrères for appreciation of his facetious remark. They seemed to share his wish and we parted the best of friends.

The permit to buy dollars and the other foreign currency had not come late that afternoon, so I had to cancel our Pullman reservations, the bank promising to do everything possible to obtain for me that permit at the beginning of the week, that I might leave as soon as possible. There was nothing to do over the week-end but wait.

I did not feel that I could impose upon my poor aunt another day, and since the question as to just when the permit would arrive was so uncertain, I decided to go, on Sunday, November 8th, to the hotel with Rose-Hélène, there to await the permit.

That Sunday morning, I stayed in our room until after eleven o'clock, packing our bags, getting ready to leave for the hotel directly after lunch. As I went down the stairs, a bag in each hand, Martine came in, from church. Her face was grave, she looked as though she had been crying. She looked searchingly at me as I smiled pleasantly and said good morning. "You haven't heard the news?" she asked me. "No, I haven't turned on the radio this morning, I have been too busy—what news?" Then she told me that North Africa had been invaded by American and English troops, that there was fierce fighting between French and

American soldiers and that there was a naval engagement in the harbor of Casablanca.

V

I stared at Martine, not understanding, not believing what she had just told me. This must be another of those wild rumors which were always circulating and which later proved to be entirely without foundation. I went to the radio, and the B.B.C. confirmed the news. I must confess that I heard the announcement with mingled emotions. I felt pride and delight; I felt regret that Frenchmen and Americans were being killed by each other's hands; and I felt a personal alarm. So long as I had planned to leave, a speedy departure was now indicated. It was impossible to know what action Vichy might take against Americans in reprisal for this North African invasion. I felt, also, that it would be distinctly unwise to go to the hotel that day. I would have to fill out a form, upon registering, which would be sent to the police station. The police thought I had already departed; so far as all the officials in Toulouse knew—in the *Préfecture*, the *Mairie* and the *Commissariat de Police*—they all supposed that I had left Saturday as I had planned to do. There was no use calling to their attention the fact that I was still there, when I might be able to slip quietly away the next day, or as soon as that permit came for me to buy my money. Tante Odile agreed to let Rose-Hélène and me stay a few days longer with her, so I carried my bags upstairs again and waited impatiently, all through that long Sunday, for Monday morning, when I could go to the bank.

All that day we listened to the radio, I to the B.B.C. and Geneva, my family to Radio Lyons and Radio Paris. We heard totally different versions of the same story and we each believed what we heard to be the correct version. The French radio said that Roosevelt had sent a message to France, explaining his "act of aggression," but they never quoted his message, in part or in full. Only those French people who listened to foreign posts knew what Roosevelt had said to them—such people were very courageous and, alas, all too few. No one at tante Odile's that dreadful Sunday dared say what she felt or thought; I was tante Odile's nephew's wife, Robert was her godson as well as her nephew, I was a guest in her home, she could not and would not be rude to me. I, on the other hand, had to remember also that I was tante Odile's guest, and I did understand how she felt. The atmosphere was heavy and

oppressive, it vibrated with our emotion, with the thoughts which were never put into words. I thought the day would never end, but Monday morning finally came and I was at the Bank of France when it opened at nine o'clock. I told them that, if I were going, I ought to be getting on my way, particularly in view of the latest developments, and they agreed with me. They promised to do everything possible to obtain from Chatelguyon, that day, the permission to sell me the dollars and pesetas necessary for my trip. They would telephone me that evening to tell me what they had been able to do.

I had lunch that day with Countess de M. who was living in Toulouse with her husband and children, they having come there from their estate in the occupied zone at the time of the fall of France. Madame de M. had been born an American but had become French by her marriage to Count de M. Just before war was declared, in 1939, she had become an American citizen once more and now, although she had been French for fifteen or eighteen years and her husband and children were French, she was considered a foreigner and was subject to the rules and regulations applicable to foreigners in France at that time. She had to sign the police register, as I did, and was not allowed to travel even ten miles away without a *sauf conduit*, which was not always granted. I was interested to learn her reaction to the invasion, to hear how she and her husband thought this latest development might affect American citizens in the unoccupied zone, including herself and me. It was such a relief to be with someone with whom I could talk frankly and freely, with whom I could show my enthusiasm at what had happened. Madame de M. and her husband felt that our own position had not been changed materially, for, after all, diplomatic relations had long since been broken between England and France, and English citizens in unoccupied France had never been treated any differently than other foreigners. I probably would be allowed to leave, as planned, and Madame de M. was not concerned for herself except for one small matter which the invasion probably would not aggravate. Madame de M.'s given name was Sallie and, because of this, she had been instructed by the French to get from America, affidavits and certificates to prove that she was not of Jewish extraction! To Vichy France, Sallie meant Sarah and Sarah was a Jewish name—it was quite useless to try to tell them that, during a certain period in the United States, Sallie was considered a fashionable name to give one's daughter. So Madame de M. asked me if I would please communicate with her lawyer when I reached the United States,

and ask him to send her the necessary papers as soon as possible, for the French were getting impatient and troublesome about it.

That evening, the bank telephoned to say that there seemed to be an inexplicable delay in the granting of my permit, and no one could say when I would have my money. This was a great blow. What could I do? We could not leave without money, and now that all my plans had been made, I did want to go. My trunks were all packed, ready to send to the station; we were living in our suitcases expecting, from hour to hour, to be able to leave.

Tuesday morning I went again to see Madame de M., told her of my predicament, asked her whether she knew anyone in Toulouse who might have any dollars I could buy. I would have to pay the black market rate, which had been about 150 to 180 francs to the dollar (as against the 43.75 bank rate) but that didn't matter. What did matter was that I had no dollars or pesetas and could not leave until I could get some. Sallie had only one suggestion: There was a Mr. C. living near-by, an American married to a French woman. Madame de M. knew that Mr. C. had dollars, rather a large amount, and he probably would be willing to sell me some at the current black market rate, especially in view of all the circumstances. Sallie knew Mr. C. very well, so she telephoned him and told him I would come to see him the following morning and asked him please to do what he could to help me with the little problem I would then explain to him.

Meanwhile, Sallie and I thought of several people who might be able to help me with the pesetas; I went to see them that afternoon, combed all the possibilities, without success. There seemed to be no pesetas in Toulouse except those in the coffers of the Banque de France which were closed to me. Well, I thought as I went to bed on Tuesday night, November 10th, I will go to see Mr. C. tomorrow morning and surely he will sell me some dollars; they are of no use to him here, and he will be glad to help a fellow American.

Wednesday morning, November 11th, I tuned in the radio before going in town and learned that the Germans had crossed the line of demarcation and were now in the unoccupied zone! I ran out of the house before Rose-Hélène should see me and went for a long walk along the country road. I wanted to be alone to think, to try to envisage all that might ensue as a result of this latest move on the part of the Germans. I was frightened and I must not let Rose-Hélène see me until I had thought things out and was more calm. Obviously, unless I could

think of something quickly, and act upon it, I would be found by the Germans and interned. I walked past Les Marroniers, and Minou saw me, came skipping out after me, mewing and rubbing against my legs to show her affection and concern. We had had to leave her with the people who had rented the house. They promised to look after her well, but they could never love the little cat as much as Rose-Hélène and I had loved her. Rose-Hélène had cried until her eyes were very red and swollen and her heart very sore, when the moment had come to say good-bye to Minou and the pinny big and, when our departure had been postponed, had refused to walk over and see them, although they were so very near. Now Minou and I walked along the country road together, and I was glad of the company of that little furry friend as I tried to work out this, our latest and most difficult problem.

It would be so stupid to get caught by the Germans just toward the end of the war, when I had held my own against them for more than two years. Rose-Hélène would be safe, being French; she could go to her grandparents, they would give her tender and loving care, but she would miss me and it seemed rather hard luck for her to lose her mother after everything else she had been deprived of. I remembered Monica's description of a German camp of concentration and her advice to do anything and everything to avoid being interned in one. No, I must not be caught. I would try, that very morning, to get some money—I *must* get some—and we would leave at once.

I walked back to tante Odile's, feeling more calm and ready to meet Rose-Hélène's closest scrutiny. I left Minou at Les Marroniers and said good-bye to her for the second and, I was sure, the last time. Tante Odile and Martine were just arriving from town on their bicycles as I got back from my walk. Tante Odile had been to her bank to get her jewels and her stocks and bonds out of her safe deposit box. Martine had been doing the marketing. They both reported the town full of German troops, some of whom were marching through on their way to the coast, others were mounting guard at various points in the town. Tante Odile and Martine were very worried about me, and rather concerned as to just how much they would be compromised by my being in their home. On the whole, however, the populace had remained calm although it was the first sight most of them had had of German soldiers and troops of occupation. The Préfet, the mayor, and the radio exhorted the people in the heretofore unoccupied zone to keep cool; the troops, they said, were merely passing through to take up positions

along the coast and the frontiers, to defend France against attack. They warned everyone that these troops would have to be fed, that the rations, therefore, of the French people would have to be reduced, but they asked them to accept this fact as inevitable and unavoidable. The German soldiers would not annoy or molest the French populace in any way, and they were *troupes de passages*, not of occupation. And so on, ad nauseam. Many people believed this, including my family. "Why, then, tante Odile, did you get your jewelry and stocks from your safe deposit box if you trust the Germans and their altruistic motives for entering this part of France?" I asked her. That was merely a sane precaution, she told me; one never knew, after all, what unforeseen and unfortunate circumstance might arise and it was best to have one's valuables in one's home. She asked me what I intended to do and I told her I was leaving then, for town. I would try to get some dollars that we might leave the next morning. Martine said she did not think I could leave as it was said in town that the Spanish frontier was closed and no one was now allowed to leave France. There was no use worrying about that, however, until I got some money and I would not come back from town until I had found some solution to that problem. Rose-Hélène had her cousins, Martine's children, to play with so I had no need to worry about her even if I stayed away the entire day.

I arrived in town after the usual half-hour's walk and there, indeed, were the Germans. I thought of the day, two years and five months before, when I had gone to Montigny and had seen the Nazis upon their arrival there. But—were these Germans? In 1940, I had seen conquering heroes, happy and triumphant, exulting in their victories, flushed with pride at their conquests. But now— These soldiers, most of them were not young, they were not happy or triumphant; they were not patting little children on the head or giving cigarettes to the Frenchmen. They were old men, old as judged by military standards; what few young ones there were among them were mere striplings of seventeen or eighteen who looked as though they were seeing their first active service. Those others, they looked old, and they looked tired. And grim. They paid no attention to the citizenry, and the French paid little attention to them. Curious, hostile glances were cast in the direction of these men in the gray-green uniforms, but the curiosity, the hostility, the glances themselves, were veiled.

There was a strange hush over Toulouse that day, broken only by the activities of the Germans, the tramping of their feet, the rattle of

their trucks, motorcycles, automobiles and green Paris buses. Inside the buses were machine guns and cases of ammunition; bicycles were piled on the roofs. These bicycles had been picked up, most of them, in the streets of Toulouse; they had been parked before shops or in garages by shoppers or working people who had expected to find them there when their shopping or work was over. The loss of a bicycle was a serious and an irretrievable one to the French and there was no other means of transportation, but that didn't matter to the Germans. They needed bicycles too, so they simply took all they could find, wherever they went.

I studied the faces of the soldiers who were standing guard at the Place Clemenceau. One of them stood at ease, looking off into space and seemed oblivious of his surroundings. He didn't look like a soldier, he looked like a *man*. A man thinking of his home and wife and children. He had a moustache, and he looked sad and homesick. No German I had seen during this war, and I had seen them constantly since their arrival in June 1940, had looked like this soldier and the others with him. The arrogant military bearing which I had supposed to be an intrinsic part of a Nazi soldier's make-up, was strikingly lacking in these men. Their uniforms were shabby, and one felt that their morale was as frayed as their uniforms. It made me realize, more than ever before, how vainglorious Germans are in victory, and how they collapse, like pricked balloons, when things go badly. The English people are at their best when they are fighting with their backs to the wall, the Germans at their worst. When they had arrived in 1940, it appeared as though a German victory were in sight, and the Nazi soldiers were nearly delirious with joy at the idea that the war was nearly over, and won by them. Now, on November 11, 1942, it was evident that there was still a long road to travel before the war should be ended, and the specter of the possibility of a German defeat was beginning to haunt the minds of these German soldiers. They would still obey orders and perform their duties because a sense of discipline is an inalienable trait of a German's character, but there seemed to be no inner spark or flame which urged them forward.

I did my errands, walking along the sidewalks only a few feet from the men marching in the streets, who would have interned me had they known I was an American; they had already picked up several Americans along their line of march and had sent them to a concen-

tration camp in Biarritz. Police dogs trotted along beside the men who were at the head of each group. These were probably the dogs who had helped guard the near-by line of demarcation. They were evidently destined now for the mountain passes.

My first visit was to the bank where I went for one last try to get the permit for which I had applied nearly three weeks before. I asked the clerk who was sincerely anxious to help me in any way he could, to telephone Chatelguyon, at my expense, while I waited there, and to try to find out whether there was any hope of the permit being accorded within the next few days. The call was put through, my dossier was found, and the reply made: "Certainly not, she will not have the money; she is an American and, since Americans are not allowed to leave France, there is no reason to sell her dollars." I whispered to the clerk to ask whether I might have only fifty dollars, or a few pesetas, but no, there was no hope, I could not have any foreign money of any kind or amount. I arranged that the money I had deposited with them should be returned to my aunt if I should not be there to claim it when it was released by the return of my dossier from Chatelguyon. The clerk expressed his regret at this contretemps, which was in no way his fault, nor the fault of the bank, and he hoped I would find some "other way" out of my difficulty.

I next went to the hotel, asked for Mr. C., who was expecting my visit. I explained my predicament and asked him whether he knew anyone who had dollars they could sell me to help me get out of France with my little girl. He told me he was very sorry, but he himself had none (this I knew to be definitely untrue, but I could not tell the old gentleman so) and he knew of no one else who had any. Besides, did I know what dollars cost that day? No, I did not know. He told me that which I did know, that some dollars had been sold in Toulouse a few days before at two hundred, but that morning, in Toulouse, after the arrival of the Germans, dollars had been bought at three hundred and thirty francs to the dollar! I would have had to pay forty-four thousand francs for a thousand dollars at the bank, but at the black market rate of that day, a thousand dollars would have cost three hundred and thirty-three thousand francs! Perhaps if I had evinced a willingness to pay that price, Mr. C. might suddenly have remembered that he had a few dollars tucked away somewhere, but my horrified incredulity told him clearly that I was not having any. He was in no danger of being interned, he was well in his seventies, so he did not intend to leave France. I do not

know what he intends to do with his dollars, but they will be good any time, anywhere, so he has lost nothing by holding on to them.

I lunched at a hotel with some friends. The General, whose room I had occupied during his absence, had returned from his holiday and was in the dining room with his wife. He came over to our table during lunch, pale and shaken by news which he had just received by telegram to the effect that the Préfet of Toulouse, a General and several officers of the latter's staff had left by plane that morning for Algiers. This was a surprise to us all as the Préfet of Toulouse had always been considered an out-and-out collaborationist. No one understood why such a quick change of front had been made; everyone wondered whether he had perhaps been against the Germans, all along, and had encouraged his reputation as a collaborationist to permit him to do underground work in security. General R. wondered what he himself ought to do; find a way to get to North Africa also, or stay in France and try to safeguard the interests of the civilian French there, and help protect the women and children and old people who were obliged to remain? General R. was not alone in his quandary during those early days of the North African campaign. Many men of honor and conscience could not at first decide just where their duty lay. Some decided one way, some another. Some had the courage to choose one course while preferring the other. Not all the men of valor left for Africa; many stayed behind and we shall find them waiting when our armies arrive in France.

During lunch, I had an idea. I would telegraph the American Consulate in Lisbon and ask them whether they could help me out of my plight. I had already sent a wire to Mr. Miller, a week or so before, telling him there had been a delay in obtaining my money, but that I would leave the moment the permit arrived. He might have a suggestion as to how to get out of France with all one's papers in order, but without money.

I wrote the telegram in French, saying, "Impossible to obtain foreign money. Can you help me from the Spanish border? Am ready to leave." I had to go to the police station to have my telegram copied in a book that was kept for that purpose, and to have the authorization of the police to send the wire. In the police station I found my old friends who looked and expressed their surprise at seeing me still in Toulouse. They supposed I had left five days before. I told them I had been detained because of money troubles, then said, "Well, you got your wish, didn't you, rather sooner than we expected?" One of them grinned, but the

police station was full of people and he was afraid to commit himself by discussing the sensational events of the past four days; he okayed my telegram without delay, but said he feared that the Germans at the post office would not allow me to send it.

And so it was. When I handed it in, the clerk glancing at it, saw that it was addressed to the American Consulate, Lisbon, gave it back to me and said that I would not be allowed to telegraph or telephone any American Consulate anywhere. I walked slowly away from the post office, wondering what I could possibly do now. Then I had an inspiration; I remembered the street address of the Consulate; I would address the telegram to M. Miller, 258 Avenida Liberdade, Lisbon, and see what happened. I got another blank, wrote the same message with this address, took the telegram back to the police station to be okayed. The sergeant's eyes twinkled as he saw what I was doing, promptly put his stamp on the paper and wished me luck in the success of this subterfuge.

It did work. That telegram was accepted and sent, and I was more lucky than I knew at the time, for only an hour or so later a ban was placed on the sending of telegrams to all foreign countries. One could not then send a wire even to Canfranc, which was a frontier town not very far away. There wasn't much I could do after I had sent the telegram but await the reply, but I thought I would go and see whether Madame de M. had had any news of interest or importance.

She had just received a telegram from the American Red Cross in Marseille which read "TOUTE LA BANDE VONT FAIRE UNE PELERINAGE DEMAIN ESPERONS VOUS VOIR." We tried to puzzle out the significance of this cryptic message—all the gang making a pilgrimage the next day and hoping to see Sallie de M.? What could they mean? Then we decided they meant they were all going to Lourdes, but why were they going there?

That evening over the Geneva radio it was announced that the members of the American diplomatic corps at Vichy and the personnel of the Embassy, the American journalists and Red Cross workers in unoccupied France all had gone to Lourdes. Madame de M. telephoned me soon after I heard this announcement to say she was going to Lourdes the next day and she would speak to Mr. Tuck (the chargé d'affaires in Admiral Leahy's absence) about me and ask him what he thought I ought to do. She would telephone me upon her return from Lourdes Friday evening.

VI

The French radio during those critical days was a farce. It was so ridiculous I could not even be irritated by it; it even seemed rather pathetic. That Thursday evening, tante Odile was sitting with her ear glued to the radio, listening to Radio Lyons for whatever pearls of wisdom might fall from the lips of the speaker who was giving us the news. He told us, in a vague, sketchy way, a few insignificant items and then said, "*Alors, à Paris—*" Ah. We held our breaths—something of great importance was about to be revealed. Listen—hush—what is it? "Well, in Paris, several parks are to be turned into plots for growing potatoes—" Even my loyal aunt turned away from the radio in disgust and looked ashamed. When I then asked her whether I might try to get the B.B.C., she did not demur as she usually did. That station told us that Giraud had gone to North Africa, that Darlan had joined the Allied cause, and that General Weygand was probably a prisoner somewhere. The family would not believe any of this until I tuned in to Geneva and the news was confirmed there. They did believe they could depend upon the Geneva station for accurate news reports, but they did not trust the B.B.C. They considered that most of what was said over that station was exaggeration or propaganda. They knew that Radio Paris was German-controlled but believed that Radio Lyons, while it told very little, told the truth. I remarked that it was not a very difficult matter to keep a reputation for veracity if one gave news about growing potatoes in Paris when history was being made in North Africa. What had been told about the potatoes was probably true, I said, but would they not prefer to listen to a few lies about exciting events than to the truth about potatoes?

Everything which could possibly be concealed from the French people those days was concealed from them. No announcement of the Armistice in North Africa was ever made to us over the French radio or in the newspapers during that week of November 7th to the 14th. And no one knew where any of the important men were, or what they were doing. You would hear people asking of each other, in the streets, "Where is General Weygand? Where is Giraud? Where is Darlan? What is really going on in North Africa?" They realized, of course, that a great deal was going on which was not being told by Vichy, but short-wave radio sets were forbidden and those few people who did dare to listen to Geneva or were able to get London on their small sets,

tuned in to those stations in fear and trembling. News was whispered from mouth to mouth, but there were so many wild rumors no one believed anything that was told them, not even the truth. All day Wednesday, the 11th, we heard over and over and over again, *ad nauseam*, the letter Hitler had sent to Marshal Pétain by von Brauchitsch, explaining why he was obliged to send troops into the unoccupied zone. Most of the French people did not know what justification President Roosevelt had given for his move, but we certainly were told what Herr Hitler wanted the French people to believe about *his* latest move. He himself probably believed what he wrote in that letter, and many of the tired, bewildered French people accepted his words at their face value at the time; especially after having had them drummed into their ears at least eight times during that one day. Slowly, irrevocably, the French people were sinking into the miasma created by the noxious German propaganda.

Friday morning I went to the *Préfecture* to ask whether my permit to leave France—and return—was still good. No one there seemed quite certain about this, but while I was standing there, trying to get the best information and advice, the telephone rang. After a brief conversation, the man with whom I had been talking returned to me and said that he had just received word that no foreigners who were citizens of countries which were at war with, or which had broken diplomatic relations with the Axis, were to be permitted to leave France. I said I did not understand this, as Marshal Pétain had announced, that very morning, that he still was in power, that the Germans had arrived in the unoccupied zone in a military and not an administrative capacity; and that Herr Hitler had agreed that Marshal Pétain was to rule and direct his people in the unoccupied zone, as in the past. But the *Préfecture* was not to be annoyed by all those little nuances. All they understood or wanted to be bothered about was a definite order, and that they had just received and repeated to me. No, I could not leave France; I could not cross the border into Spain.

I then succeeded in talking with a man at the *Mairie* who was in a position of authority and importance there. I explained my situation, asked him what he thought I ought to do, whether he thought I could get across the frontier. He said that, officially, he could tell me only that the frontier was closed. "But," he added, "I will tell you something that is quite off the record and merely my own personal opinion. There is some confusion and uncertainty this week as to just who is in power,

as to how much authority the Germans in this zone actually have. Profit by that confusion. If you really want to go, go now, go as soon as possible. Don't wait until next week, for then there will be no confusion." I talked a little longer with this man, who had great culture and intelligence, a combination one did not always find in a *fonctionnaire*. He told me what was happening as regards the feeding of the Germans in Toulouse. Each soldier and officer who had arrived on Wednesday and who intended to spend some time there, had been given ration cards. But each was given four times the amount the French citizen had! Where the French populace had one card, each German had four, but this the French people themselves did not know, fortunately for everyone concerned. When I thought of how slim our rations had been all summer and fall, with only the normal population of Toulouse to feed, I wondered what the French would have to eat since so much of the food that was there would now go into German mouths.

My next visit was to the Spanish Consulate. There I asked the Consul whether Spain had closed the frontier at Canfranc. He assured me that they had not; that, so far as Spain was concerned, the frontier was open. "If I should arrive at the Gare Internationale of Canfranc," I asked, "would my Spanish visa be honored?" and he promised me that it would be. They could not control what happened in France, before I got there, but if I succeeded in reaching the Spanish border, I would certainly be admitted into Spain since I had a Spanish visa which was still valid.

With all those matters and questions straightened out in my mind, I returned to tante Odile's to see whether a reply had come from my telegram to Lisbon. There was nothing. Toward eight o'clock that evening, however, a young man came to the villa, with a telegram for me marked "URGENT." Telegrams had always been telephoned, heretofore, but the young man explained that it was now forbidden to receive telegrams from a foreign country. He had happened to be alone at the receiving board when my telegram arrived and, knowing who I was, he was anxious that I get the wire which he knew was important and would help me to get away. He had taken the risk of accepting the telegram and bringing it, himself, after dark, although it had arrived some hours before. In the post office, therefore, and in the police station, in the *Mairie*, in the *Banque de France*, in the *Préfecture*, I had been treated with friendliness and consideration. Not because it was I, but because I was an American. All those people seemed anxious to help

an American escape a German concentration camp—the only person who had *not* helped was—an American—Mr. C., who refused to sell me a few dollars.

The telegram, translated, read “JOHN SMITH GARE INTERNATIONALE CANFRANC WILL MAKE NECESSARY ADVANCES FOR TICKETS MADRID AND JOURNEY STOP JOHNSON TRAVEL AGENCY MADRID WILL FURNISH FUNDS TICKETS MADRID LISBON STOP ADVISE ME YOUR ARRIVAL CANFRANC CHARLES JONES”

Charles Jones! I had forgotten all about him, but now I remembered having known him in Paris where he was an assistant director in the American Express Company. It was he who had been making arrangements and reservations for my trip to Morocco when I had hoped to get an *Ausweis* to go there direct from Paris. He had been most kind and helpful at that time and I had later heard that he had left Paris to be in the Marseille office of the American Express Company and had eventually gone to Lisbon. But I had forgotten all this until the receipt of this telegram. Bless Mr. Jones's heart! Now I could take the eight o'clock train the following morning for Canfranc. He had turned up again just at the moment and in the place when and where he could be most useful to me. What marvelous luck for Rose-Hélène and me! While I was exulting about this, the telephone rang. It was Sallie de M. who had returned from her trip to Lourdes. She had gone to the Hotel Nevers, where the Americans were being held in forced residence, but had not been allowed to talk with Mr. Tuck. She did talk with Mrs. Tuck, however, who relayed Madame de M.'s message about me to her husband. Mr. Tuck sent word back that if there was an American anywhere around who had her papers in order, for heaven's sake tell her to leave, and by the first train. He said that they themselves might be in Lourdes for weeks, perhaps months; they hadn't many illusions about a diplomatic exchange being effected for them at an early date. I was given one or two verbal messages to deliver to the Embassy at Madrid if I did get through—and Mr. Tuck did want me to try to get out.

This strengthened my decision to leave the following morning by the early train. My favorite philosopher, Marcus Aurelius, advised, “If thou seest clear, go by this way content, without turning back; but if thou dost not see clear, stop and take the best advisers. But if any things oppose thee, go on according to thy powers with due consideration keeping to that which appears to be just. For it is best to reach this object, and if thou dost fail, let thy failure be in attempting this.” I had not

seen clear in this present situation. I had not known whether I ought to attempt what might be a difficult and dangerous journey with Rose-Hélène, who would have to suffer the consequences with me of my decision. I had taken the best advisers, and they all thought I ought to follow the course it would have been my own inclination to pursue. There were things opposing me, but they were only Germans. I would go on according to my powers and it did seem only just that I should leave France when I had been planning, long before the Germans arrived, to go. I would not be running away from them, in panic or in fear; I would merely be carrying out my original plans when I took the train the next morning for Madrid and Lisbon.

I must confess that I did not feel as calm as all that, during the night before our departure. That was zero hour for me and I imagine even the most hardened campaigners feel rather nervous at that time. I tried to visualize the happenings of the next day. What would happen on the train? What would I do under various circumstances; where would we be sleeping the next night—in our compartment on the way to Madrid, or back in Toulouse, having been turned back at the frontier by the Germans—or—in the custody of the Germans? Well, I thought, as day dawned, we will soon know.

VII

Saturday, November 14th, Rose-Hélène and I said good-bye to tante Odile, I not at all certain we would not see her again that evening. She said she would have the maid leave our beds ready for us for a night, or two, until she was certain we had got over the border. A taxi took us to the station, a charcoal burning car I had managed to engage to take us that long distance, with our bags. I had sent my trunks to the station two or three days before, in anticipation of a hasty departure, and they had been waiting for me in the check room from where they were rescued that morning and registered through to Madrid. The train was ready and waiting in the station when we arrived, but there were very few passengers, as the destination was Canfranc, at the Spanish frontier and, as the frontier was presumably closed, no one was going in that direction—by train, at least. There were a few people who were obviously for way stations, but Rose-Hélène and I appeared to be the only international travelers.

Legally I was allowed to take one thousand francs out of France with me, five hundred for Rose-Hélène and five hundred for me. At the last moment, however, I thought it might prove useful to have a little extra with me in case of emergency, so I tucked five thousand francs away in my purse, in addition to the one thousand francs. This bank note I would show at the frontier if I reached it safely; I would tell the customs officials frankly that I had it, that I had brought it with me because of the uncertain conditions, not knowing whether perhaps I might have to go back to Toulouse or Lourdes. They could take the money—which they would do, of course, even without my gracious permission—and keep it for me or send it back to tante Odile.

Martine and her daughter went to the station with us to see us off. I arranged with Martine a kind of code language to be used in letters or in any telephone calls I might have to make. We would call the Germans sheep, or *les moutons*, we would speak of America as my mother, of Robert by a girl's name, and so on. The train gave a funny little toot, Rose-Hélène and I kissed our cousins good-bye, laughing a bit shakily when I suggested that I might be seeing them again in a few hours, and the train moved slowly out of the station. Southwards, toward the border. We settled ourselves in a first class compartment which we had alone, there being no one else in the car. What few voyagers there were, were traveling third class that day. I put Rose-Hélène in a corner by the window, gave her some books to look at, and established myself opposite her. I too, had a book, but my eyes saw nothing on those printed pages. I kept looking out of the window at the stations along the way—we seemed to make every stop—watching for Germans, wondering when we would see them, whether they would board the train. I watched the people who passed in the corridor and gave our tickets somewhat nervously to the conductor when he came to collect them. He said nothing, however, except his perfunctory *Merci* and went on about his business.

We had left Toulouse at six o'clock. Nine o'clock came, then ten. Only two more hours to go. So far so good. All seemed calm in the train, and it sped on, toward the frontier. Rose-Hélène was very good in her little corner. So far as she knew, this was just an ordinary journey, such as she was accustomed, by this time, to take with Mama. We were on our way, she knew, to Madrid and Lisbon, where we had been last year, then we were going to America.

A little after ten o'clock, a young man came in and sat down in our

compartment, in a seat on the side opposite me, next to the door. There was nothing especially unusual about this, as the compartment had not been reserved for our exclusive use, but I felt vaguely uneasy, all the same. I glanced at him, saw that he was a man of about thirty, well-dressed, obviously French. He sat reading quietly in his corner, paying no attention to us, so I, reassured, turned to my book and forgot him. Rose-Hélène was prattling, in her pure French, to the teddy bear who was making the trip with us this year, and I said nothing, not wishing to destroy the young man's illusion that we both were French. I left it to Rose-Hélène to establish our nationalities in the man's mind. The train stopped at another station, a few peasant women got off, no one got on, and we continued on our way. Eleven o'clock. One more hour and we would be in Canfranc, safe.

The man in the corner suddenly lowered his newspaper and demanded abruptly, "Where are you going?" His tone sounded conversational, but my instinct told me that there was more to this than a mere desire to make conversation. "To Madrid," I replied briefly, wishing to speak as few words as possible and not choosing to divulge our ultimate destination. "What nationality are you?" "My daughter is French, I am American"—and then I knew I was in for it.

He shook his head. "No, you are not going to Madrid today," and, with a dramatic gesture, he turned back his lapel and showed me his badge "Police." "You have shown me your credentials," I responded, unmoved (outwardly) by this, "I will show you mine," and I gave him my passport and various other papers. He looked them over carefully, but again shook his head as he returned them to me and told me that there was not the slightest hope or possibility of our getting to Canfranc, which was only four stations away. There were two more stations, then a third at which the Germans had established themselves. There, he told me, everyone would be made to get off the train; papers would be carefully examined by the German control and no foreigners would be allowed to go beyond that point. The day before, he told me, fourteen people were taken from the train by the Germans, put into a big truck and driven off, no one knew where. There was an old lady of eighty among these Belgian, Dutch and Polish citizens, and one Norwegian. Their destination was not disclosed, but the soldiers said, "You go where you eat only little bit and work much," which made everyone assume that they were being sent to Germany, although everyone wondered how much work the old lady could do. American and English citizens

were being interned everywhere in the unoccupied zone, Monsieur Belvian said, but those who were found in their homes were rounded up in a normal way and sent to Biarritz; those who were found trying to leave France were harshly treated and sent off to Germany. He, Monsieur Belvian, was from the *Préfecture* at Toulouse. He had been assigned to this train to warn foreigners to leave it before reaching the station where the Germans were, to see that they did not get caught by the Germans, and also to insure that they did not leave France, contrary to the latest regulations.

I said that all that was outrageous. Who had given the Germans this authority? Had not Marshal Pétain announced that he still was in power here in unoccupied France? M. Belvian agreed that, actually, the situation was a little "irregular" and a protest had been sent to Vichy by the *Préfecture* at Toulouse, against the liberties the Germans were taking with that Toulouse-Canfranc train. He hoped and expected that action would soon be taken regarding this, and expressed the optimistic opinion that the line would be open the next week for travelers whose papers were in order. But at that time, and for the past three days, he said, the frontier was, and had been, definitely closed. What, I asked Monsieur Belvian, did he expect me to do? Merely get off the train at the next station and return to Toulouse? It was useless to argue, to try to reason. The fact was that the Germans were only three stations away from us, and I would very soon, very quickly, have to make up my mind what to do.

While I was trying to arrive at a decision, Monsieur Belvian said he would go through the train and see what other people there were on it. He would be back soon, and I was to hurry, for we were due to arrive at the next station in eight minutes.

Well. That was that. I looked at my child opposite, who, realizing that something was wrong, was regarding me with an anxious frown. "What is the matter, Mama? Was that man scolding you?" she asked. "No, darling, but Mama has to decide something very important very quickly, so will you help me by being very, very quiet so I can think hard?" She sat back in her corner, watching me tensely. What, what to do? The train was rushing on toward the station, the minutes and the miles speeding by. I had to decide something, and very soon.

Well, let me see. If we got off the train, I would be safe—but for how long? I probably would be picked up in a few days if I went back and would be sent to a concentration camp anyway. Biarritz wasn't too

disagreeable a place to be interned, as to climate, but I had no illusions about internees being allowed to remain there long—they probably would be sent off to Germany before the winter was over and that fate I wanted to avoid at all costs, if I could. . . . No worse than that could happen to me if I were taken today—they couldn't *kill* me. . . . But, if I should be taken that day, Rose-Hélène would be taken too. I could not leave her in a strange town alone; she would have to go with me, and goodness knows where that would be. . . . If I were interned from Toulouse, Rose-Hélène could be sent to her grandparents from there. . . . But, if we went back, I was sure to be interned; if we went on, we might get through. The Germans had never yet been able to defeat me in any purpose I had had (except that of securing Robert's release), perhaps I could talk my way out of France and into Spain, if I could find an intelligent officer somewhere to whom I could plead our case. . . . "Let thy failure be in attempting this—" Yes, we would go on and take our chances. I mentally asked my child to forgive me for taking a risk, the consequences of which she might have to pay as dearly as I, but it was because she was the kind of child she was, that I dared take the chance. I felt confident that, if she were a little older, and I could ask her opinion, she would say, gallantly, "Of course, Mama, we will go on."

When Monsieur Belvian came back to our compartment, therefore, he found us just as he had left us; hats and coats off, Rose-Hélène with her book on her knees, our bags in the rack. The train was slowing down at the station. "Aren't you getting off here?" he asked, in severe surprise.

"No, we have decided to try to get through."

He looked desperately out of the window, saw the trainman ready to signal the engineer to go on, realized there was nothing to be done about getting us off at this station, and sat down.

"You are doing a very foolish thing," he said. "You are taking a grave risk which you will regret terribly fifteen minutes from now; then it will be too late."

I told him that I thought I could convince the Germans of my right to leave France; if there were an officer at the station, I was pretty certain that I could prevail upon him to let us through. There would be, Monsieur Belvian said, no officers, only soldiers; guards posted there with orders to do certain things and those orders would be carried out. I admitted that this was bad, for I knew too well that it was useless to argue with a German soldier; still, I said, we would try it.

"Madame," said Monsieur Belvian sternly, "you will not get through to Canfranc. For, even if you succeed in passing the German control, I myself will send you back." I looked at him in incredulous amazement. "You mean that?" He assured me, firmly, that he did. "What nationality did you say you were?" I asked him, and was glad to see him wince. "I *am* French, and I am remembering the words of our Maréchal when he told us 'Your first duty is to obey.' If more Frenchmen had performed their respective duties in the pre-war years, and during 1939 and 1940, France would not be in the tragic position in which she now finds herself. At any rate, my orders have been not to let any foreigner, except certain ones, leave by this frontier, and I intend to see that that order is obeyed."

"You speak so sentimentally in your newspapers about *les femmes des prisonniers*. You have one before you now, and the child of a French prisoner"—nodding toward Rose-Hélène, who was looking anxiously from one to the other of us—"yet you are ready to send me back where you know I shall be taken by the Germans. You speak about 'duty.' I have done my duty since the very beginning of this war. I protected our home so long as there were Germans near to menace it; I have stayed near my husband during all these years when my government and my friends were urging me to return to the United States. I have stayed in France because I love France, because my home is here. I have suffered physically and morally as much as any Frenchman for France's defeat. You are making me pay a rather heavy price for my devotion to France and to my duty."

But nothing I said, nothing I could say, would make any difference to this man; nothing would alter him in his determination to put us off that train. From the very first, he had shown no sign of friendliness or sympathy, his attitude had been deadly serious—hostile even. "Very well, Monsieur," I said bitterly, "we shall get off the train. It would be not only useless, but stupid to take a chance when there is nothing whatever to be gained by doing so. Even if we won, we would lose. But, remember, Monsieur, it is you, a Frenchman, who are responsible for our getting off this train, not the Germans."

I asked him the name of the next town, and he told me, Morez. I asked where we could spend the night and he gave me the name of a hotel, and the proprietor's name, adding that I could tell the man that Monsieur Belvian had sent me there. But, he said, there was a train going back to Toulouse that afternoon; I could take that, there

was no necessity of spending the night in the little town. I told him I would not be taking that train, I did not run as fast as all that, not when I was running in the wrong direction. We would wait until the next day in this border-zone town and see what might develop overnight. He agreed to let me know if there should be any change in the rules, and got my bags down from the luggage racks, said he would attend to getting my trunks from the registered baggage car.

As I put on Rose-Hélène's coat and hat she enquired whether we had arrived in Spain and I said no, not just yet, but the man had said we must get off here, so we would have to do so, nicely, and not be difficult about it. I would tell her all about it later. We got off the train, then, at Morez, only ten minutes from the point where the Germans were waiting to inspect this train. Monsieur Belvian rushed to the baggage car, instructed the man to put our trunks on the platform, giving him my checks.

He turned to me just as he was getting back on the train. "I know you are very angry with me now, Madame, but some day you will thank me for this."

I smiled wryly. "I will thank you today, if you wish. I know you have only done what you think is right. *Au revoir et merci, Monsieur.*"

The train pulled out of the station, leaving us standing on the empty platform.

I looked around. It was a charming spot in the foothills of the Pyrenees Mountains. There were sleek cows grazing in the pastures, sheep on the steep hillsides, the spires of the village church could be seen about a half mile away. The town was of about six hundred population, I had been told, and it looked lazy, sleepy, peaceful. It was difficult to believe that, only a short distance away, there was the frontier where so much confusion and tension prevailed. I asked the station-master whether I could leave my trunks in the depot somewhere and he told me I could if I did not intend to leave them there too long. I said we would be returning to Toulouse the next day, so he put the five pieces in a corner of the ticket office and gave me a receipt for them. I asked him where the Hotel de la Paix was to be found, and he told me; up the long hill quite a piece, then along the main street. We walked slowly along, Rose-Hélène and I. It was not yet noon, and we had plenty of time. There was all the rest of that day to be got through, and we had nothing to do to occupy our time. I carried one valise with me and the famous blue canvas sack. The proprietor welcomed me cordially

when I mentioned Monsieur Belvian's name, rather coldly before I did so. We had an excellent lunch, better than we had eaten in France for months, simply prepared but good, wholesome food—meat, and potatoes. Monsieur Belvian had warned me not to talk to anyone so I paid no attention to the other guests in the plain dining room. There were about seven or eight of them, and they appeared to be foreigners, but I was so absorbed by my problem I gave no thought to them, nor did I wonder what they were doing here, in this little village so far from everywhere—except the frontier, which was about twenty miles away.

While Rose-Hélène was having her afternoon nap, I tried to think out what we would do the next day, and the days to follow. I concluded that it would be best to go to Lourdes. There I would be near my compatriots. It would be pleasanter for me to be taken with a group than alone—and, I thought ruefully, it would make everything so much simpler for the Germans to find us all in one place. Actually, I was not especially unhappy at what had happened. Failure there had been, but at least I had attempted to do what had seemed best and, when we got off the train, it was not of my doing. I had been forced to go; there had been nothing else to do. So there was no use regretting it. Thus I thought, fatalistically. Besides, I had had time to realize that that beautiful *permis d'aller et retour* no longer had much value. If we left France now, we probably could not return in six months, as I had planned, and who could tell when we could come back? It never had been my wish or intention to leave France and Robert for a long or indefinite period of time but now, with the latest turn of events, we would have to stay out of France, once we had left it, at least until the Germans had been driven out. This meant that, if Rose-Hélène and I had gone to America, we probably would not have been permitted to go back to Europe until the war was over, as Washington would no longer recognize permits that had been issued at Vichy. So, I thought resignedly, perhaps it is all for the best.

Later that afternoon, Rose-Hélène, her teddy bear and I went for a walk, and I explained the situation to my little daughter. After all, it was her right to know; it all concerned her as much as it did me. The Germans were keeping her Papa, she knew that, didn't she? She nodded solemnly. We had had to leave L'Ormeau so they wouldn't take me too, because I was an American, and Germans did not like Americans. Now they had come into this part of France, so Mama had had to leave more quickly than she had planned, to avoid being taken by the soldiers.

The man on the train had told me that, unless we got off quickly, the soldiers would get on the train and take us. So we could not go any farther. We could not go to Spain, Lisbon, or America. We would have to go back to a place called Lourdes where there were lots of other Americans. There was nothing to worry about, Mama wasn't worried or afraid, and Rose-Hélène mustn't be either. But, I warned her, she must not talk to strangers, and she must not tell anyone that Mama was an American; she was to say that I was French, like Papa and herself. All this her flexible mind accepted and she was, as usual, quite content.

The proprietor came to me as I was getting ready for dinner to tell me that some German officers had come to the hotel for dinner and to spend the night, perhaps I would rather eat in my room. He knew, by my accent, that I was English or American and he could not help knowing why I had got off the train when I obviously was on my way to Spain or Portugal. I told him that I was accustomed to seeing Germans and I didn't mind in the least their being there, and Rose-Hélène and I went down for dinner. We all ate together, in the small dining room, the officers paying no attention to us except to smile once or twice at the little girl who herself coldly ignored them. They appeared to be Austrians, judging by their uniforms and caps, and were more alert than were the troops I had seen in Toulouse.

That evening I telephoned tante Odile who was very surprised to hear my voice. "Oh," said she, not too brilliantly, "weren't you able to get across the frontier?" "This is a charming little town, tante Odile, there are sheep grazing everywhere," I answered warningly. "Oh, yes. Er—well, what are you going to do? Do you intend to spend a few days there to rest?" I told her I thought we would go to Lourdes the next day, to make a pilgrimage to the shrine there. I would write her from there, perhaps she could come to see us.

The next morning we awoke to find the sun shining brilliantly. The air was clear and invigorating, it was a beautiful day, that Sunday, November 16th, a day that made one glad to be alive—and free. Rose-Hélène and I walked down to the station about ten-thirty and I bought our tickets for Lourdes. The train, I was told, left at two-thirty, so we had four hours to wait. The Toulouse-Canfranc train would be passing soon, and I wanted to see whether there were many people on it; perhaps Monsieur Belvian would be there, might have some news for me. So we walked back up the hill which led to the town, and I sat down on a bench from which I had a view of the station below.

Rose-Hélène played with her teddy bear and some imaginary playmates, a little distance from me. I looked up at the hills in front of me. The tinkle of the bells on the sheep and cows which grazed there, came faintly to my ears; I never had seen a more peaceful or lovely scene, except in Switzerland. I turned my eyes to the right, looked higher, to the snow-capped peaks of the Pyrenees Mountains. On the other side of that mountain range lay Spain, and freedom. Those peaks rose to lofty heights. They looked as though they could not be scaled—but could they not be? There must be some way to get through and across those mountains. If it had been snowing or raining that day, the whole course of my life would have been changed. I would not have sat upon that bench, I would not have been inspired to do what I later did.

As I looked up at those mountains, the 121st Psalm came to my mind, that verse which reads: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help . . . The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and even for evermore." Thy going out—and thy coming in! . . . I looked at my child, playing happily near me. How blessed I was to have such a child. We had been through so much together, and now I was about to be separated from her. Why should I have to lose her? Who had the right to separate us? No one. No one on earth. And what purpose would I serve Robert by being interned, even if I were in Germany, nearer him? He would know that I was in the concentration camp because of him, because I had stayed too long in France only to be near him, and that knowledge would give him more pain than could anything else.

I pursued my thoughts and reflections. What had I been about to do? Retreat. All my life, my policy had been to go forward, always and ever forward, when it was humanly possible to do so. Never before had I run away from anything, never before had I admitted defeat as I had been about, that very afternoon, to do. I realized, as I gazed at those mountains, that the course of the rest of my life depended upon what I did that day. If I turned back, I would always know and remember that in this, one of the biggest crises of my life, I had gone, not forward, but back, in retreat. My confidence in myself, my faith in my ability to surmount difficulties and overcome obstacles, would be gone. I would never again be the same and I did not want to change. I am not yet ready to become an anvil, I thought. I still want to be the hammer; I want to go on fighting as I always have done. If I go back to Lourdes, I know I shall never get out of France. I should be

going right into a trap, and it would be stupid to do so, knowing full well what I was doing. But, if I tried to get out, I might succeed—"The Lord shall preserve thy going out" . . .

The train came in, the one which would be, in less than an hour, in Canfranc. We walked down to see who got off, who got on, who could be seen through the windows of the train. No one got off, no one got on, and I was told, later, that there had been only one passenger on the train, a diplomat from Vichy. I saw the proprietor of the hotel, standing a short distance away from the depot, engaged in earnest conversation with the guests I had noticed in the dining room. I suddenly knew, as well as though I had been told, what they were talking about. They were making plans to escape out of France, probably over those mountains, and the proprietor was helping them. I determined to wait until Monsieur Louis should be alone, then I would ask him what I could do about getting over the mountains.

After several minutes, the people walked past me up the hill. I sat quietly on my bench, waiting for Monsieur Louis who followed soon after. I stopped him. "Well, I have decided what to do." "Yes?" "Yes," watching his face closely. "I have bought our tickets for Lourdes. We are taking the afternoon train there." I read what I hoped to see on his face. "Oh, is that what you will do?" I spread my hands in a gesture of hopelessness. "It is the only thing I can do—*isn't it?*" We understood one another perfectly. We were speaking the language that is spoken in France today.

Monsieur Louis looked toward Rose-Hélène. "It is the only thing you can do, since you have your child with you."

"But if I didn't have her with me, what would I do?"

"If you were alone, you would leave this afternoon at about two o'clock, walk to a given point, which you would reach about two hours later, where you would join the other guests you may have noticed in the hotel. Tomorrow, you would all cross the Pyrenees together, with a guide."

"Anything I could do alone, I can do with my little girl," I replied, "but will you let me talk to her for a few minutes, then we will come back to the hotel and I will tell you what we are going to do." Assenting to this, Monsieur Louis walked on back to his hotel.

I called Rose-Hélène to me. "Listen very carefully to what I am going to say, darling. It is something very important." She sat on my lap, looking up into my face, realizing from my expression that this was

a serious moment for her and for me. "Are you big enough to be very strong and brave and to do something that little girls don't generally do?" She thought she was but—what was it? "Well, you see, baby, if we go back to Lourdes the Germans will eventually take Mama. They won't hurt you, you can go and stay with Grandmère at Les Chênes—" At this she shook her head violently, and the tears welled up in her eyes and began trickling down her cheeks. "Well, then, you will have to do something that is going to make you very, very tired. But it is the only thing to do if I am to get away from the Germans, if you and I are to stay together. You see those high mountains up there? No, not those nice green hills where the sheep are grazing—those high mountains over there, with the snow on top. Do you think you could walk over those?"

She looked at those peaks, so high and so steep and sharp. "But how can we walk right up into the sky like that?"

"We can do it, Rose-Hélène, if you will help Mama by being strong and brave; by not crying if you get tired, by not getting frightened. If you do this, you will be doing it for Mama—you don't have to do it. You will be all right with Granny if we don't go. Shall we do it, or shall we go back?"

She was too young, of course, at four-and-a-half, to make a momentous decision of this kind, but she was not too young to realize what was expected of her if we did undertake this venture. I knew, as she told me she wanted to do it, as she promised that she would not cry even if she got tired, as she assured me that she would not be frightened at anything so long as I was there—I knew, as I looked at her firm little chin, and her serious, determined eyes, that she would not fail me. I only hoped, that physically, her little frame would stand the endurance test. She was in better condition than when we had first returned from Morocco, but she was underfed and undernourished; she weighed only thirty pounds. I could, however, carry her a part of the distance. I knew we would get through.

So we went back to the hotel. I called Monsieur Louis to my room and told him we would be ready to leave as soon after lunch as he wanted us to go. But there was the question of money. What was this going to cost? I had heard that people paid thousands, and even hundreds of thousands of francs to get smuggled out of France, and I had only six thousand francs with me. "It will cost no more than you are able to pay," said this angel in disguise. "You can't have very much

money with you, since you expected to leave France by train." I told him that I had six thousand francs; I would give him one thousand, out of which he would have to take the amount of his hotel bill, and there would be five thousand francs for the guide. Would that be enough? He assured me that it would be—that part did not worry him, and must not worry me. What did concern him was Rose-Hélène. "What will she wear? What will you wear? You are both dressed for the train, not for mountain climbing. Has she no other socks but those?" looking at her little cotton socks—"and no other shoes?" looking at her thin-soled sandals. No, that was all she had, but I would take an extra pair of socks and shoes with me in the blue bag which was to make the trip with us. This would not be enough, Monsieur Louis said, for the coldest part of the mountains, and he unearthed for me a pair of heavy woolen socks of his own (which he could not replace) which I could put on over Rose-Hélène's shoes when I was carrying her. Her coat I could do nothing about. It had been a good coat, three winters before, but the wool was worn thin and it was indecently short, leaving exposed to the elements, a broad expanse of leg from her ankles to her little rump. She was wearing a bonnet to match the coat, tied under her chin, but her ears were not protected. She had a pair of kid gloves, not lined, on her hands. I myself wore a light weight navy blue coat (the one for which I had bought the lining) with skirt to match, and a fine cotton blouse. Dress hat, town shoes, and silk stockings—a pair I had carefully saved and cherished for some special occasion. This did not seem to be just the time or place for them to make their debut, so I suggested that I go down to the station, get a polo coat and a pair of walking shoes out of my trunk, a pair of lisle stockings and a beret and sweater. This I did, telling the station master that my baggage would not be there much longer as we were leaving by the afternoon train, as he knew, since it was he who had sold me the tickets for Lourdes.

Into the blue bag, back at the hotel, I put a nightie and bedroom slippers for Rose-Hélène, an extra dress and a pair of shoes and socks for her; my diary, Robert's letters, some sugar and chocolate and other provisions; toothbrushes, a sponge bag with a cake of precious soap. That was all. I knew I would have that bag to carry all the way and I did not want it to be any heavier than necessary. The other suitcases I left with Monsieur Louis. When we arrived at Canfranc, he said, I was to get in touch with a Monsieur Henri. This man was a friend of Monsieur Louis'; he would be able to telephone to Morez to tell Mon-

sieur Louis that his "family" had arrived safely. When this telephone call came through, Monsieur Louis would put my trunks and bags on the next Canfranc train and I would have them a few minutes later.

I telephoned tante Odile at lunch time, told her I was going to visit Mother for a few days, I would see her, tante Odile later. She understood, said she hoped I would have a pleasant little journey (she could not, of course, know *how* we were going) and that she would be looking forward to our return. I told her to write to my mother-in-law as I did not have time, those days, to do so, give her our love and tell her we hoped soon to be home again.

IX

I saw the party of which Rose-Hélène and I were soon to be a member, set forth, on the stagger system so as not to arouse the suspicion of the neighbors, immediately after lunch. We did not have to leave until a little later, as, because of Rose-Hélène, Mousieur Louis had arranged for a friend of his to come and get us with his donkey cart to take us to the point from which we would begin the afternoon's climb. I asked Monsieur Louis whether the others of the party knew we were coming and he said yes he had told them. They naturally were not too enthusiastic about having a small child with them, and most of them felt that, under these circumstances at least, there was *not* safety in numbers. The more of us there were, the more likely we were to be noticed. But they did accept the idea of our coming with them, which really was very decent of them, since it was they who had made all the arrangements, and I had never spoken one word to them; they had no idea who or what Rose-Hélène and I were. All they could see was that we were not of their race or nationality.

The donkey cart arrived a little after two o'clock. Rose-Hélène climbed gaily up onto the driver's seat beside the fat, jolly old Frenchman who owned the equipage. I hoped it would at least hold together until we could reach our destination and would get old Jules back to his home, but I was rather doubtful about this. However, I, too, climbed up onto the high seat, we waved good-bye, expressing affectionate thanks to kind Monsieur Louis, old Jules clucked to the sleeping donkey, and we were off. Rose-Hélène asked whether she could drive the donkey. Since the fastest he could be prevailed upon to go was a slow, plodding

walk, his ears flopping, his head hanging dejectedly, it didn't much matter who held the reins—the whip was what made him go—so Rose-Hélène had the honor of driving. I felt very conspicuous and uncomfortable perched up on that high seat and it seemed to me that it must be perfectly obvious to everyone just what we were up to. We hadn't gone very far when Jules stopped to have a chat with an old crony who leaned over a fence and seemed to have something important to relate. They talked a kind of patois, French with a sprinkling of Basque, and I understood not a word of what they said. I was most anxious and worried, fearing that the man was saying it was useless for us to continue our journey, that it had been learned what we all were about to do, or that the Germans were everywhere and we surely would be caught. I looked uneasily at the automobiles and motorcycles which roared back and forth along that road, which led to the frontier; there were trucks, too, and all the vehicles were filled with Germans. They paid no attention to us, however, their minds being busy with other and more important matters, apparently.

Jules finally shook the reins, brandished the whip and we were off once more. It appeared that the friends' house was in need of some repair, Jules' son was a carpenter. That is what they had been talking about, while I had sat there, trembling and apprehensive, in this dash for freedom—if you could call the slow, painful gait of that donkey a dash. We had to get out and walk up most of the hills, Jules and I, but I didn't mind that. I could walk faster than the donkey, and, anyway, it was there because of Rose-Hélène who remained at her end of the reins throughout and who had been saved a two-hour walk by this ride behind the poor old donkey. We reached a dirt road which wound through some woods and which we followed, leaving the main highway, not to return to one for days. A few miles of this brought us to a cluster of shacks, in one of which we were to find the rest of our party. Most of them were assembled there, all but two of the men who had not yet arrived, having taken a slight detour to avoid so many miles of main road where they might be picked up. Old Jules left us there, we shook hands good-bye—no question, apparently, of giving him any money, Monsieur Louis had seen to that—and he turned the donkey's head toward home.

There was a nice little cat in the shack, upon which Rose-Hélène pounced with great glee; it reminded her of her Minou. She petted and caressed it, it purring loudly, while we grown people introduced our-

selves and I was told the plans for the journey. We were to go that afternoon to the cabin of an old woman for whom they were waiting. Her cabin was up in the mountains, and she had come down that day to bring beans and potatoes to sell; she would take us back with her to spend the night. Her hired man would act as our guide the next day, to take us as far as the Spanish border.

It sounded easy and simple, and we were all eager to begin the trek. The two men arrived soon after Rose-Hélène and I had appeared on the scene, and a few minutes later, an old woman of seventy hove into sight, riding a decrepit donkey.

We started, then, at four o'clock, our luggage being fastened to the donkey's back, the old woman walking with the rest of us. The little cat insisted upon following us, in spite of all our efforts to chase it back. The trail began at that point, a steep and narrow path which we had to follow single file. The cat was with us for at least two hours, which worried me for I was afraid it would get lost in the mountains when it eventually had to leave us. I never did know what finally happened to it, it just seemed to disappear in the underbrush when we were quite high in the mountains. By that time I had little attention to give to it; it was all I could do to take care of Rose-Hélène and myself.

The trail was almost perpendicular in spots and we were not in training or condition for mountain climbing. Mountain climbing had never been a sport that had appealed to me, and all I knew about it was what I had seen in movies and read in newspaper articles which seemed to deal mainly with casualties among hardy, intrepid mountain climbers. I still felt no enthusiasm for this form of exercise which brought into play muscles which had not been used for years, perhaps never. Frequently I got cramps in them, as one does when swimming, and I could not move. I would sink quietly to the ground, pretending that I wanted to catch my breath a moment, would wait for the cramp to go away, then get up and lope after the party which had gone on ahead of me, if one can lope up a perpendicular incline which was covered with loose, rolling stones which often carried one backward two steps for every step one took forward.

We climbed and climbed, the old woman urging us on, saying we must arrive before dark. Darkness began to fall and we were still an hour's walk from our destination. The next hour which, in reality, became two, was the worst part of the whole trip, for we were walking in utter and complete darkness, the night mists swirling around us.

We could see nothing before, behind, or beside us. The donkey and the old woman knew the trail perfectly, having gone up and down it all their lives, but we did not know, when we set our foot down, whether it would find the solid ground or—eternity. Rose-Hélène had been far sturdier all this time than had I; she had trudged bravely along, close behind the old woman whose donkey led the procession. I tried to carry her part of the way but this interfered with my equilibrium; I nearly toppled over sidewise at one point, with her in my arms, after which we all agreed that it would be best for Rose-Hélène to walk. We boosted her up on the donkey for a few miles, but the bags kept slipping about and she found this perch too precarious and preferred her own feet as a means of locomotion. When it got dark, I kept tight hold of her coat-tail, groping with the other hand to find out what was there. Too often there was nothing—just empty space. We stumbled along for a couple of hours like that; no one had a flashlight (no batteries were to be found in France by that time); occasionally one of the men would light a match or his cigarette lighter to try to see something, but there was never anything to be seen, only the mist and the darkness.

At about seven-thirty, we heard dogs barking and saw a dim light not far ahead of us. Soon two or three dogs were running around us, sniffing and barking at our heels. Then we saw a small cabin out of which a woman came, to see what the noise was about. She could recognize, by the light which streamed out of her house, the old woman who was with us, whose neighbor she was, and she saw that a large party was with her. The two women exchanged curt good evenings—it was evident that they were not on good terms. The neighbor asked where we were going, what we were doing up there and one member of our party, a Belgian, foolishly said that we were on our way to Spain.

"To Spain!" she exclaimed. "Why, then, are you away up here? This isn't the route to the border, you will never get anywhere from here." Our hearts sank. Had we come all this way for nothing? What did this old woman intend to do with us? The Belgian woman persisted, "But we are going to spend the night in this woman's cabin and she is going to give us a guide to take us to the border tomorrow."

The old woman to whom we had entrusted our lives snorted. "Guide! Spend the night in my cabin! How do you think you all will find room to sleep in my small cabin, and where do you suppose I can find a guide for you? I have a hired man but I need him for my own work. He can't be gallivanting off, taking people over mountains." And off she went

in a huff. I followed closely at her heels, deciding that she was our best bet. I had seen, earlier in the day, a gleam in her old eyes which I had liked, and I was sure she would not let us down or cheat us in any way. She was old, she was crotchety and she was tired. She was irritated, too, by this crowd of people who had walked so slowly that we were very late getting back to her home, who had been asking her every five minutes for the past two hours if we were nearly there, and now they had betrayed her to this neighbor whom she plainly feared. If she became too exasperated, she might send us all back where we came from, but I was confident that she would do no worse than that. So I sent Rose-Hélène on ahead to walk with her, the trail now being wider; I thought the child could put the old woman in a better temper, and she did.

"You are all right," I heard her muttering to Rose-Hélène. "You are a good little girl, you are strong and you walk right along and you don't complain. You could get over the mountain, and your mother too, but those others will never have the strength to do it." Those others remained behind for a few seconds, looking uncertainly after us, not knowing whether to stay with the woman who had offered them beds for the night, or to go on and see what our old crone meant by her sudden change of front. Perhaps she could be persuaded to change her mind again, in their favor. They decided upon the latter course and hurriedly said good night to the disgruntled woman and came after us. There was an uneasy silence the rest of the way, everyone afraid of the old woman, and wondering what would happen when we reached her cabin—if we ever did reach it.

What joy, what relief, to see, at about eight o'clock, a yellow light gleaming faintly a few feet before us, and to be told that that was our destination for the night.

My poor little girl had been walking almost continuously for four hours, had not had her customary nap, nor her usual afternoon cup of milk and slice of bread. She had always been accustomed to being in bed by seven o'clock and here she was, still walking. She was practically walking in her sleep by that time, and staggering with exhaustion. I asked the old woman whether I might have some hot milk to give my child before I put her to bed, which I wanted to do as soon as possible. I undressed Rose-Hélène before the fire; it was cold, that November night up in the mountains; she smiled wanly at us all and made a heroic effort to keep her eyes open until the milk had been heated.

She drank that, ate some bread and jam from my blue bag of provisions, and was ready for bed. There were, it appeared, but two beds in the cabin, and we were twelve people to sleep there that night. It was agreed that the five women of our party and Rose-Hélène should have the two beds and the men were to drape themselves wherever they could find a place to sit or lie. The old woman lit the way, with a candle, into one of the bedrooms and turned down the bed for my sleeping child. It was not a very wide bed, but it was clean, and there was a handsome crocheted spread on it. I spoke about this bedspread to the old woman, who looked pleased and said she had made it herself, when she was young. The pattern was an intricate one, and it was beautifully worked and I complimented her sincerely. She stooped and kissed my little Rose-Hélène good night.

We went back to the kitchen where the others had arranged themselves in a semi-circle before the fire. The room was dark except for the light of the fire which was raging in the big fireplace, and the shadows of the people who sat before it, danced upon the bare, stone walls. I could not believe that I was here, in this place, a part of that weird scene: these oddly assorted people, washed up, by the fortunes of war and fate, together on this mountain, sitting there in the semi-darkness. I sat far back in a corner at the end of the half-circle and studied the faces of my companions in misfortune.

Our hostess, gnarled and wrinkled, bent from hard work, sat at the other end of the group. Next to her was her hired man, our guide, a man of about forty. He was in his stocking feet and was busy greasing a pair of enormous thick-soled boots, obviously making ready for the trek the next day. He was a taciturn individual and devoted his attention entirely to the matter in hand—his shoes. Then there was a young boy of about twenty who sat grinning at us all, not saying a word. The old woman noticing me looking at him, said, "He is very intelligent, that boy. He can't talk, nor hear, but he is very bright. He knows how to read. He has read a book—that one over there, on the table. He has read it several times." At first I felt indulgently amused at this old woman's considering a person intelligent because he had read one book. Then I realized that it *was* an achievement, a miracle almost, that a poor boy, with no material advantages and the added handicap of being a deaf-mute, should somehow have learned to read, up there on that mountain, where people of education seldom came. I looked at the boy with respect, and added interest, and he grinned at me, as though he understood

what had been said about him. I shall always regret that I failed to get up and go to the table to see what the book was which he had read several times. I feel I shall have to go back up to that cabin some day, just to find out, for the question bothers me every time I think of it.

Next to the boy sat a young woman about thirty-five years old, Madame Ginette. She was Jewish, had been born in Poland, but had become French by her marriage to a French doctor who had been killed in the present war. She, too, was a doctor, and she was on her way to the United States. She had lived in Marseille, had, for a long time, been planning to go to America for she had no one left in France, since the death of her husband, to keep her there. She had her M.D. degree, had planned to come to the United States and complete her studies and practise here. Her final papers were late in arriving, so she got away only on the 11th of November, the day the Germans arrived in Marseille. She took the train to Toulouse, then the train to Canfranc.

In the compartment with her were three German Jews who were now sitting next to her, before the fire. These three had started on their travels from Bavaria, which was their home. They had fled from there to Belgium about the time of Hitler's first pogrom in Germany. There they remained until that country was invaded. They had a small store which they had had to abandon when they fled to France, to Cannes, in May, 1940. They decided, at that time, that America was their only true refuge, and they made application to the American Consulate at Nice for the necessary papers to get them to America. While they were waiting for these, they opened another small shop. Their papers arrived in November, 1942, just in time for them to get out of Cannes in safety, but not in time for them to liquidate the shop and leave in the orderly way they had planned. They abandoned this store as they had the other one and fled with what little capital they had left. Good fortune got them to Toulouse on the same day as Madame Ginette, and led the latter to their compartment. One of the Germans, the father, was a hunchback, one of the ugliest old men to look upon that I ever had seen, but he was not at all ill-tempered; in fact, he was always in a good humor and he scrambled over those mountains with the best of us. He spoke only German, his son and daughter-in-law spoke a little French. None of them spoke English, nor did Madame Ginette, although she spoke fairly good French. The son was a simple little man, devoted to his father and to his wife, honest and brave. His wife was more intelligent than he. She was like a little bird, cocking a bright and anxious eye at

everything, curious to know how that and why this was done, solicitous about the two men who depended upon her to work out their common problem. She had got them that far, but Madame Ginette was a stronger reed to lean upon as she was more intelligent, had had a better education, and had a wider knowledge of the world and of social customs than had Little Bird, as we called her—I never learned the name of that family. They were lucky, indeed, to have fallen into Madame Ginette's kind and capable hands, for she it was who got them off the train at Morez when they had been compelled, as I was, to get off there. And it was she who had made all the arrangements which led to our being there, in that mountain cabin, that evening. Little Bird and her family were only too glad to follow Madame Ginette's leadership, for they were numb and frightened and incapable of direct thinking or concentrated action by that time.

Next to the three Germans sat three Belgian Jews, and these three were far less sympathetic than the others. They were fairly rich, and one felt that they had gold and jewels and money of every country hidden on their persons. There was a girl of about seventeen, her mother and father. The girl was vain, the mother spoiled, the father greedy; they all were selfish and self-centered, and snobs. They felt themselves infinitely superior to the other four, when actually they were decidedly inferior in point of view of character and moral worth. They had met the rest of the party at the hotel in Morez and had drifted along with the others, not knowing what else to do. They too had been put off the train; they were on their way to Caracas in Venezuela, coming from I don't know where. They were the ones who complained the most during the entire trip, who made trouble when trouble could be made and one knew, when one looked at them, that they were the kind who would do so. Only one thing did we all have in common apart from the fact that we were fleeing from Germans—all of us had Spanish visas, all of us had our papers entirely in order, although it began to look as though I would just get into Lisbon, if at all, under the wire, on November 18th, the day the validation of my passport would again expire.

We sat, then, before the fire, munching whatever we had brought with us to eat, and drinking the hot milk the old woman had given us. The Belgian put some whisky into his wife's cup of milk, and into his own, to fortify them and help them to sleep. They asked the woman whether the next day's climb would be as difficult as that of the afternoon. She stared at them. "Today's climb a hard one? Why, that was

nothing at all, we are only in the foothills of the mountains. Tomorrow will be the real climb, over the peaks of the Pyrenees." The Belgians groaned, whereupon the old woman said she had thought, all along, that they would be unable to make the trip and she would not allow them to go with the rest of us the next day. They would hold us all back, her hired man would not get home until well after dark, we would not get down off the mountain before nightfall—all because of them. She said they had already caused trouble, by telling her neighbor, who could not be trusted, what we were about to do. It was quite possible that, unless she now gave the woman a fair sum of money, the matter would be reported to the authorities; even if it were done too late to do us any harm, it would be most unpleasant for her, our hostess. That was why she had talked as she had, that evening, and she was still provoked with these Belgians. The more she saw of them, the less she liked them and it took all their powers of persuasion to get her to include them in the party, which, however, she did finally agree to do, but most reluctantly.

We were advised to get to bed early, as we would be starting at four the next morning. The Belgians delicately asked where—er—the bathroom was. Our hostess looked at them in scorn. "Bathroom!" she snorted. "If you want to wash, there is some water there"—indicating a crude sink. "If you want anything else, you just go outdoors." So they just went outdoors, the mother and daughter, said good night when they came back in, and went to the other bedroom.

When I went to bed, which was soon after that, I took off my shoes, coat and skirt, in the dark, and lay down on the bed beside my child, who was still sleeping soundly. Soon after, Little Bird came softly in, removed her shoes and various other things, and got into bed beside Rose-Hélène and me. We were three abreast in a bed that was hardly wide enough for two. Someone else then came into the room, then a third person, then a fourth. The two German men, and the Belgian, evidently. There was much stumbling and fumbling and grunting in the dark, then someone stretched himself across the foot of the bed—which made the fourth occupant—and the two others tried to settle themselves as comfortably as possible in two wicker chairs which were in the room. I never did know which of the three men slept in our bed that night—and, judging by his snores, he did sleep, which is more than I could do. We were six in the small bedroom and the window had not been opened. I did not want to get out of bed to open it after they had

all settled themselves there, being afraid of falling over someone in the dark. I lay in a cramped and painfully uncomfortable position, unable to stretch out because of the body stretched across the foot of the bed, unable to move my arms or legs because there was no place to put them if I did. Rose-Hélène was in the middle and she stirred uneasily in her sleep, becoming aware that she too was cramped, and very nearly crushed. She wriggled a little, woke, then whispered, "Mama?" "Yes, darling?" "*Il me semble qu'il y a beaucoup de monde dans ce lit*"—(it seems to me that there is a crowd in this bed). I started to giggle; it was so ridiculous, her plaintive, somewhat bewildered whisper in the darkness, the four other people in the room breathing heavily, the two men in their wicker chairs moving about in their subconscious discomfort. Rose-Hélène heard the sound and whispered, again, "Who is that, Mama, playing with the wastebasket?" At that I could hardly control myself. I shook with hysterical laughter, Rose-Hélène snickered softly, too, although she still understood nothing of what was going on in that bedroom that night. I tried to explain the situation, could hardly do so for my giggles and we both lay there, laughing for nearly a quarter of an hour.

What a joy to have a little comrade who liked the same kind of jokes I did, who could be depended upon to laugh with me at any and all times! But what lay before us the next day was no laughing matter and Rose-Hélène needed her rest so as to be ready for it. So I put her in my place, next to the wall, and I took the middle; I kissed her tenderly, love and pride welling up in my heart for her, told her to go to sleep, which she soon did. I lay there, wide awake most of the night, unable to move an arm or a leg or even a muscle. I discovered when I tried to get up at three-thirty, that various parts of my anatomy had slept, even if I hadn't; I was numb all over. I staggered out to the kitchen, found the guide already up and about, the old woman too. I let Rose-Hélène sleep until the very last minute, until after I had had my cup of milk and was dressed, ready to leave. I dressed and fed my child (bread and milk) and we were ready, a little past four, to start.

X

It was still dark, but the sky was faintly streaked with light, and there was no mist. It promised to be a fine day, for which we were devoutly

thankful. The old woman warned us to go very quietly past the few neighboring cabins, that no one should hear or see us leaving. I explained to Rose-Hélène, who seemed wide awake in spite of the early hour and in her usual good temper, that she must not laugh or talk as we went past those houses, because we might wake the people who still were asleep there. We all thanked our hostess and said good-bye to her; I bent down and kissed her wrinkled cheek, obeying a sudden impulse, and Rose-Hélène made a little curtsy, which pleased the old woman immensely. A mule was going with us to carry our bags and to bring the guide back. The Belgians had a number of bags: Rose-Hélène and I between us only the blue sack, Madame Ginette one suitcase and a small bag, the German couple carried knapsacks on their backs. All the bags and bundles were strapped on the mule's back, we waved good-bye to the deaf-mute and the old woman standing in the doorway of the cabin and tiptoed away in silence, in the cold gray light of early dawn, following, in single file, the path which led on and up past the other cabins.

The guide with the mule led the way, Rose-Hélène and I followed closely behind, the seven others were strung out behind us. Soon we came to the end of the path and there was nothing but rocks and barren land. There we left all signs of civilization and plunged into the real mountains.

From then on, there was never a trail or even a little footpath. There was nothing to tell us in which direction to go except the sun, which was not yet up, but the sun, when it did rise, could not tell us how to get around or over those peaks which loomed so forbiddingly before us. The steep climb began, and for the next eight hours, we were walking, as Rose-Hélène had put it, straight up into the sky. The guide cautioned us not to talk or laugh too loudly during the trip. There were soldiers and spies with field glasses in the mountains and it was best to be careful until we were safely across the border. No one had the slightest inclination to talk during that long, agonizing climb; no one had any breath, in that rarefied atmosphere, to waste on words. And, as for laughing, none of us saw or found much to laugh at during those hours. We were exceedingly fortunate in the weather—we had prayed that it might not rain—or snow—and our prayers were answered. It was one of the most beautiful days I had ever seen. The sun rose in a blaze of splendor, the snow-covered peaks were suffused with a roseate glow, the air was crystal clear, as exhilarating as champagne. As the sun rose

higher, we got very warm, and our exertions left us hot and panting for breath. But as we climbed higher, the air became frosty and we knew the snowline could not be very far above us. We began putting on coats we had shed a short time before and were glad to keep moving, as the guide constantly urged us to do. There was, he said, no time to lose.

The Belgian woman, after the first half-hour, announced that she could not climb another step, so, after a consultation between her husband and the guide (and, I suppose, the promise of an extra fee) the bags were rearranged and she was hoisted upon the back of the patient and long-suffering mule. There she rode, in state, until the foot of the highest peak was reached and from there on she was obliged to walk, as the mule was to be left behind, it being impossible for him to negotiate what lay before us. He was tethered to a stake the guide had brought with him and there awaited—I hope—the guide's return that afternoon. Rose-Hélène also had ridden some of the way that morning, the guide and I taking turns carrying her pickaback. When we reached the snow, she was delighted. There was only a thin crust of it on the rocks at first, then, as we climbed higher, it got deeper. In some places it was as high as our knees, in others only above our ankles. Rose-Hélène squealed with glee and wanted to get down off the guide's back to feel of it, but we told her there was no time. However, as we continued to climb, the air got colder and colder and Rose-Hélène's face began to look blue and pinched. My hands were freezing, although I kept them in the pockets of my camel's hair coat. Suddenly Rose-Hélène began to cry.

"My hands," she sobbed, genuine pain in her voice, "and my feet. They are so cold."

Her hands, which had been tightly clasped around the guide's neck, were so stiff with the cold it was difficult to unclasp them to lift her down. I sat down on a rock in the snow, took off her shoes and stockings, and the woolen socks which were over them and her little thin gloves. Her fingers and toes were numb, and blue. I took off my polo coat, wrapped her in that, held her in my arms and rubbed her feet and hands with snow, she still crying with pain. As I rubbed, however, her little feet gradually became supple and rosy, her hands too, and the warmth and comfort of my arms calmed her—she was soon all right. It was plain to be seen that she would have to walk, from then on, to keep the circulation in her arms and legs. I tied my woolen scarf over her hat, as there was a stiff breeze and the ribbon under her chin was

not enough to keep her hat on. I put my gloves on her hands, over her own—she was a weird-looking object, but warmth was the important thing. She tried at first walking with the woolen socks on over her shoes, but we had to take them off as they prevented her getting sufficient foot-hold on the snow and on the slippery surface of those rocks. I cut the feet out of the socks with the guide's knife and left the top part over her legs. There just was nothing to be done about her feet in their paper-thin soled shoes but there never was one more whimper or protest from her for the rest of the day, or for the entire trip.

I wondered, as I watched her resolute little figure stoutly climbing the steepest and most difficult peaks, from where she got her strength and endurance. Part of the time she scrambled up, on all fours, like a little bear; where the incline was not so steep, she trudged sturdily along, chattering gaily to whomever happened to be near her. Sometimes a peal of her infectious, merry laughter would ring out as she saw something that amused her. She sang her favorite songs *Au Claire de la Lune*, *Mon Ami Pierrot* and others, and there was not one among us who was not cheered and encouraged by the mere fact of her being there. Instead of being a liability, as some among the party had feared a small child might be, she was a decided asset. Not one among us had more physical endurance or moral courage than Rose-Hélène and even the Belgians seemed ashamed to whine and complain as they had been doing, when they saw that gallant little figure before them marching pluckily along. When her suède sandals became soaked through—the snow in some places having drifted as high as her knees—I had to carry her once more. I took off her shoes, wrapped one foot in the woolen scarf which had been tied on her head, and the other in a scarf Madame Ginette lent me. The woolen socks were so heavy and wet it was hard to drag them off; I stuffed them in my pockets with the wet shoes and carried her as far as I could, when the guide took her until I could catch my breath and get the kinks out of my back.

I remember, during the worst part of the climb, being so foolish as to risk a glance before and above us to see where we were going. Usually I hadn't the courage to look ahead; I kept my eyes on the stout boots of the guide, just in front of me, knowing that all I had to do was follow those, to walk, like an automaton, not thinking, not worrying, trying not to feel. Just setting my feet in the big footprints of the guide, moving my legs, mechanically, secure in the knowledge that this was carrying me forward and upward—and onward, toward the Spanish frontier.

But once, in a rash and daring moment, I looked up. There, rising stark before us, was a peak several hundred feet high, granite rock, covered with snow. "But where," I gasped to the guide, "where do we go now?" Without turning his head to reply he waved nonchalantly at the peak before us—"Over that." "But how can we—?" then I stopped. The guide knew his business, that was already obvious, and if he said that was where we had to go, and that we could do it, probably we could. At any rate, we had to, but I did not dare look up again, not until we were safely on the other side of that peak, which I afterwards learned was eight thousand feet above sea level.

I remember thinking, at about eleven o'clock that morning, after we had been walking for seven hours, that my legs just would not carry me any farther. My spirit was willing, even eager, but the flesh was awfully weak. There were those constantly recurring cramps in hip and thigh muscles, and the pounding of one's heart, which organ seemed at times to be somewhere in one's head rather than where it should be. I was at the end of the procession at that time; we all had our moments of weakness during the day; that was mine. I thought again of the Psalm which had inspired me to embark on this enterprise—"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills." Oh, dear God, I can't possibly lift anything else at this moment but my feet, and I don't want to look up at those "hills." But I might look back. To see from where we had come, to see how it would be if we should turn back and abandon this foolhardy attempt altogether. I stopped, braced one foot higher than the other, and turned. What a glorious sight met my eyes! We were far, far above the clouds. The sun was shining through them, the snow-capped peaks of other mountains in the chain could be seen here and there, but, in the main, there was just that sea of soft, fleecy white clouds. I could not see from where we had come, our trail—if any—led downwards, straight into those clouds, and far, far below them. I realized then, if I had not before, how far, how high we had come and that realization, combined with the inspiration of the beauty and grandeur of the scene, gave me the strength to continue.

We ate our lunches sitting on the rocks and there was no difficulty finding water to drink, water clear and pure and cold, as bracing as sparkling wine. Rose-Hélène ate sugar and chocolate most of that day, as fuel for her energy, which is about all she did eat, for all I had was a little pasteboard box of jam and some bread in my bag. After we had left the mule, we all had to carry our own luggage which wasn't too

great a hardship for me, with the blue sack, but the Belgians staggered under the weight of all their suitcases. Why they had not left them with Monsieur Louis to send on by train, as the rest of us had done, nobody knew, except themselves.

At about two o'clock, the guide in front of me suddenly stopped and said, "I am in Spain; this is the frontier. You are still in France," looking at the rest of us strung out behind him. We couldn't see any difference between where he was and where we were; there was no sign of anything to mark the frontier, but he ought to know. So we scrambled forward and stood in a happy group around the guide, congratulating him and each other for having arrived at least this far in safety. We still were on the top of the Pyrenees, and had a long way to go before we reached X., our destination for that night. But, we were in Spain; that, in itself, was sufficient cause for rejoicing. This was where the guide was to leave us, for he did not dare get caught in Spain. He told us to continue walking until we came to the third mountain, which could be seen in the distance—the far distance. From the top of that mountain we would see, if we looked down, the barracks of the Spanish frontier guards. We were to descend the mountains at that point, show our papers to the soldiers there, and go on, if permitted to do so, to the town of X. where we would spend the night. We had only to walk along the side of the mountains until we came to the point indicated, where we were to begin the descent.

We paid him, then, our good and honest guide. I gave him what I had, the five-thousand franc note, about \$125. Madame Ginette and the Germans gave what cash they had, the rest of their slender capital being in checks which could be cashed only at Canfranc or Madrid. The Belgians doled out what they thought the man was entitled to have. Entitled to have! Some guides were demanding small fortunes of the parties or individuals they were escorting over the frontier—and getting what they asked. Some had even been abandoned by their guides after having paid the money, only to find that they were not yet in Spain; some had wandered around for hours, quite lost, and had been obliged to spend the night out in the open, up in the mountains—after having paid ten times the amount we paid. We gave what we had and it was gratefully accepted. Our guide earned, it is true, about one thousand dollars that day, but he had worked hard for his money, which he would have to divide with the old woman who had not charged us for the night's lodging; he had risked imprisonment, perhaps worse, to bring

us here. He had taken us the most difficult way, right over the top of the Pyrenees range, but that was to avoid meeting French customs officials or Nazi patrols which were in the lower and more accessible points in the mountains. I never understood how he had found his way, for there had been no sign, since we left the trail in front of the cabin that morning, of anyone's ever having been where we were then. There was never a footprint, of man or beast, no shrubbery, no trees to blaze a trail. But he knew those mountains and he guided us, the hard but the sure way to the Spanish frontier. Luck had smiled upon us when it placed us in the hands of that honest guide on a perfect November day. With an incompetent or a dishonest guide, in a snowstorm, or in the rain, anything could have happened to us. As it was, we accomplished what was a difficult feat with the minimum of risk and effort.

We all shook hands good-bye with the man whose name we did not even know, who had spoken not more than a dozen words to us during the entire trip, but who was responsible for our having made our escape out of France to safety and freedom.

But our day was not yet over. It was only a little after two o'clock; we had been walking ten hours, but we had at least three or four more hours' walking to do, the guide had told us, so we lost no time striking out toward that third mountain. It was not easy, walking along the side of those mountains. It was impossible to carry Rose-Hélène along there—we would certainly topple over sideways both of us and roll down the side of the mountain—so I showed her how to walk on the sides of her feet, and brace herself that she might not lose her balance. Once she did fall, and she rolled several feet before I could scramble down and catch her. She cut her cheek on a sharp, jagged rock, a deep gash, the scar of which can still be seen, ever so faintly. The cut did not seem to hurt very much perhaps because her cheek was so cold, and she did not cry; in fact, she thought it was "droll" to tumble down the hill and see Mama stumbling and half falling after her. It was exhausting, walking in that crab-like fashion, clambering down into gullies and up again on the other side, balancing ourselves on the side of the steep and precarious slopes. We often had to walk on all fours, using our hands to balance and steady ourselves. All of us had a few tumbles. The Belgian woman had the worst of all; she insisted that she had sprained her ankle and could go no farther. She got hysterical and said she could never get down off those mountains, she would die up there. The procession was held up while everyone tried to calm her; we already had lost much time

because of her, for she could go only about half as fast as we could have gone without her.

Madame Ginette and I had a quiet conference, and we decided that, if we stayed with her, we would all spend the night in the mountains, which we did not care to do. So we told the rest of the party that we were going on, with Rose-Hélène, to try to find someone who could show us the way down, or to find a trail ourselves. We told the others to adjust their pace to that of the Belgians and we promised to send someone back to them if we found anyone to help us. If we found no one, we would come back ourselves. They could not get lost if they kept going forward, westward, with the sun. So we three went on, Rose-Hélène, Madame Ginette and I. We could see the valley far below, but no houses, no barracks, no signs of life or habitation anywhere. We went on for more than an hour, still seeing nothing of the barracks for which our eyes were anxiously searching. It was then nearly four o'clock and we were beginning to feel really alarmed when Rose-Hélène, who was ahead, exclaimed, "Look, Mama! Soldiers!" Madame Ginette and I straightened up, shaded our eyes from the rays of the setting sun, and looked in the direction toward which Rose-Hélène was excitedly pointing. Yes, she was right. There, straight ahead of us, coming toward us, were four or five soldiers. With guns. Rose-Hélène was worried, fearing that they were Germans, and that they would take me, but as they came closer, we could see their pointed hats, which told us that they were Spanish soldiers of the civil guard.

We were so glad to see them, we greeted them with the enthusiasm of old friends. One of them promptly picked Rose-Hélène up in his arms, without saying a word, and started off down the mountain with her. They spoke no English or French, and we knew no Spanish, but we managed to convey to them the fact that there were six members of our party farther back. The leader of the group detailed two men to go along and pick up the Belgians and the Germans; the rest went with us. We offered to show our papers, so proud that we had a Spanish visa and eager to show it, but they motioned that all that would be taken care of below. The thing was to get down off the mountain.

It took us four hours to do so, with those experienced guides—it was eight o'clock when we arrived, exhausted, at the barracks we had expected to reach three hours earlier. We then knew that we would never have found our way down alone, that night, and we realized how high we had been. Arduous though the ascent had been, the descent had been

harder on the knees and thighs; we were so stiff we could hardly walk on level ground when we reached the bottom—except for Rose-Hélène, who had ridden happily all the way down on the backs and shoulders of the soldiers, who took turns carrying her, acting as though it were a pleasure to do so. We were welcomed in friendly fashion by the other soldiers in the barracks and they indicated that the first thing to do was feed Rose-Hélène and get her to bed—the papers could be looked at afterward.

The problem of where we were to sleep was solved nicely by the soldiers giving us their beds; they slept on the floor of the kitchen. Rose-Hélène was so tired she fell asleep while I was taking off her hat and coat. Sixteen hours' walking and travel had used her strength and she had come to the end of her rope for that day. I couldn't even wake her to feed her, so I undressed her, put on her nightdress, she still fast asleep, and put her into the cot with its straw mattress, which had been assigned to us. There were two of these cots in the room. Rose-Hélène and I were to share one, Madame Ginette would have the other. Other rooms were given to the rest of the party, which did not arrive until an hour later. The Belgian woman was in a state of collapse. She was given some hot tea and put to bed, sobbing that she never, never would have undertaken this trip if she had known how gruelling it would be. She thought her troubles were over, but the soldiers explained to us, after she had gone to bed, that we still were in the upper foothills of the mountains and had a four-hour walk the next morning before we would be back to civilization. We were, theoretically, under arrest, and would remain so until we reached the town of Canfranc, the point of entry into Spain for which all our visas called. We would go, the next day, to the town of X., where we would spend the night, then we would be taken, the following day, to Y., where we would be given a thorough examination by the Commandant. It was he who would decide whether we could be taken on to Canfranc, or whether we would be imprisoned and perhaps later sent back to France.

I had a packet of Lyons tea which I had bought in Tangiers and had since been treasuring; I don't quite know why I had taken it with me on this journey, but we were delighted to have hot cups of tea to drink that evening—there was no fear of its keeping any of us awake, and we did need the stimulant to revive our somewhat flagging spirits. I had a few biscuits left in the bag and those, with the tea, were my supper. We all drifted off to bed after we had eaten, all of us somewhat in a

daze. I lay down on the edge of Rose-Hélène's cot, which was just wide enough to accommodate one thin soldier, if he didn't roll around too much. The straw mattress was lumpy and the sheets were grimy, but when one thought of the kindness of the soldiers who had given up their beds to us, the lumpiness and grime did not seem to matter. Once, during the night, I did roll off the cot onto the floor. I was rather surprised, for I hadn't fallen out of bed for years and had not expected to do so again, at my advanced age, but the cot was low and no harm was done. Madame Ginette occupied, in solitary luxury, the other cot. She had brought no night clothes, either, so Rose-Hélène was the only one who had the pleasure of sleeping in a nightdress. We learned that the Belgians had theirs, however, and face creams and perfume. We were told that the young girl had carefully but hurriedly made up her face when she had seen the soldiers approaching, even up on top of the mountain. Oh well, she was only seventeen years old and very pretty, so that was simply the automatic reflex of a young and pretty girl when she spies a male, wherever it may be.

XI

When I went down to the kitchen the next morning at six, several soldiers were getting ready to go up into the mountains for another day's patrol work. Each was slinging his gun and field glasses over his shoulders, and taking provisions and equipment with him for a day in the mountains. This they did every day. They did not often return with a prize catch of eight adults and one small girl, but they occasionally did find people who had strayed across the frontier and had found themselves in this part of the mountains, as we had. The same procedure was followed with everyone they found; they were placed under arrest and taken to X. and Y. where it was decided what disposition was to be made of the prisoners.

I had breakfast, another cup of tea. Our provisions were gone. I didn't really mind for the nervous excitement kept me going. It was nearly forty-eight hours since any of us had had a hot meal, but I wasn't at all hungry; my chief concern was for Rose-Hélène, who did need food. When I woke her, she smiled sleepily. I explained to her, as I dressed her, that we would have to walk some more that day. We would not have to go as high, nor as far, but she would have to be strong and brave

as she had been the day before. I told her how proud I was of her, how much she had helped me up until now, and I knew she would be helpful again today. When I took her down to the kitchen, the soldiers, noticing that I had nothing to give her but some hot water with sugar in it, gave her some of their bread—and their rations were pitifully small. The Belgians, who had staggered down by this time, gave her some jam to put on it, and there was a little chocolate left for her to eat later on.

We set forth for that third day's walk at seven o'clock. There were two guards with us; one led the procession, the other walked at the end of it. Each had his gun. That part of it thrilled Rose-Hélène now that she knew that these were kind Spanish soldiers who would not harm us, but who, on the contrary, were so nice to her. They told us that if we could reach a certain lumber camp by eleven o'clock, we could ride from there to X. on a truck which would be leaving the camp at that hour, thus saving an additional twenty miles' walk. That was an incentive for us all to make every effort to accomplish the distance in four hours and we did make good progress, although the going was very difficult. The trail wound through pine groves and forests, across small streams and rippling brooks, all of it most satisfying and picturesque if one were on a camping trip, but difficult to negotiate in a hurry. The Germans were transported with joy. The woods reminded them of their native Bavaria. They swung along, singing and laughing, a sharp contrast to what they had been the preceding two days, quiet, tense with fear and anxiety. They were now on their way to America, the land of the free—they themselves were now free from persecution and fear. You felt that every fibre of their beings was singing with rapture at that realization and at the knowledge that they no longer had to be afraid.

Those little rippling brooks were very pretty, but they were a nuisance when they had to be forded. It is no easy matter to balance yourself on slippery stones when you have a child weighing thirty pounds on your back. I also had that blue sack to carry. My feet were soaking wet before we had gone very far, but there was nothing to be done about that. Sometimes the water was too deep for stepping stones; we just had to take off our shoes and stockings, put them in our bags and wade across. Rose-Hélène thought that great fun. The water was icy cold and I didn't enjoy it swirling around my knees as I staggered across the swollen streams with my child clinging to my back. We forded at least ten streams on that four-hour hike, and I had lost all enthusiasm for bab-

bling brooks by the time we straggled into the lumber camp just before eleven o'clock. Our two guards had been polite and fairly pleasant, but they had not helped with Rose-Hélène as had the others the day before. However, they had orders to deliver us to a certain place, and perhaps if they had carried a child, they would have been less efficient as guards and soldiers.

There, before the lumber camp, stood the truck which was to take us to the little town of X. The driver did not at all see where he could put ten grown people and one child, but it was finally arranged that Little Bird would sit on Madame Ginette's knees, Rose-Hélène on mine, and the Belgian girl on her mother's lap, all of us in front, beside the driver. The soldiers and the men of our party would arrange themselves among the logs on top of the truck, in the rear. This we did, the soldiers maintaining their hauteur and dignity even under these conditions, their guns prominently displayed. We were cramped on that hour's ride, sitting four abreast, but it was much better than walking and not even the Belgians complained.

We arrived at the little village of X. a few minutes past noon. We were dumped out in the center of town, where a small crowd gathered to watch us. The soldiers motioned for us to follow them. We were taken to the town hall and locked in a large room, the soldiers going off to find the mayor, the secretary and other town dignitaries who would decide what was to be done with us for the night. I sat quietly in a corner with Rose-Hélène on my lap, awaiting passively whatever was to happen.

After a half-hour or so, the door was unlocked and opened and a short, plump little man entered the room, closely followed by a tall, thin man and a girl. The latter had been brought as an interpreter as she spoke French very well. She had fled to France during the civil war in Spain and had been taken in by a French family who had cared for her for two or three years. The little man stood looking around the room at the nine prisoners. His eye fell upon Rose-Hélène; he stared at her, then asked the soldiers whether she had come with us, whether she, too, had come over the mountains. Upon their answering in the affirmative, he burst into tears, rushed over and kissed Rose-Hélène on the forehead, and took her in his arms. He said, through the interpreter, that she was to be sent at once to his home where his wife would take care of her until he had looked at our papers. He had, he said, three little girls, one of them just the age of this one, and they could play together. We would

be his guests for the night. Rose-Hélène was not too enthusiastic at the idea of leaving me just at that time and in that place, but I explained to her that I would come very soon, and asked her please to go with the young girl. So they went off together, and when the girl returned a few minutes later, she said that all was well at the mayor's house; Rose-Hélène had been put in the chimney seat before the big fire and given a cup of hot milk to drink. She and the little girls were getting acquainted and she seemed perfectly content to wait there.

The mayor wiped his eyes as Rose-Hélène left the room, shook his head—"To think that children have to do such things—and women, too," he added. He went over all our papers, very carefully, seemed glad to find that each of us had Spanish visas and five of us the permission (I the right) to go to the United States. The fact that we were in a part of Spain we had no right to be in necessitated our being held in custody at X. until we could leave the next morning for Y., the important center of that district. There was only one bus a day from X. to Y. and that bus left at seven-thirty each morning, so we would spend the night at X., Rose-Hélène and I as his, the mayor's guests, the others of our party at the hotel, with the two guards.

Our presence in the tiny village created much excitement and a kind of half-holiday was unofficially declared that the populace might turn out to have a look at us. We learned that we had walked about forty-five or fifty miles during those three days. Rose-Hélène, apart from looking very pale, with deep blue shadows under her eyes, and feeling much lighter in my arms than she had three days before, seemed none the worse for her experience. She had slept a long time that afternoon, after we had both been given a delicious lunch, then had played with the little Spanish girls until supper and bedtime.

The mayor, a friendly and agreeable little man, with his shy but warm-hearted wife, received us into their home as though we were honored and most welcome guests. An American, a college professor from the University of Wisconsin, had lived in that town for several years, the mayor told me, and had been well liked by everyone in the town. He asked me to send the professor his warmest regards when I got back to the United States, which I promised to do. Apparently that professor had been a most successful ambassador of good will for he had left, in that little Spanish town, a most pleasant and friendly feeling toward his country.

The Spaniards of that town were grateful to the United States, the

mayor said, for the food which had been sent to Spain during the past year; it was due to America's generosity in this respect that the Spanish people were far less hungry than they had been the year before. It was apparent that neither the mayor nor the other men of influence to whom I talked were behind the Franco regime, although they did not advertise their opposition. That is not done in a dictator country. It was the opinion of those people, simple people, it is true, in an unimportant town but Spaniards, nevertheless—it was their opinion that the majority in Spain were against Franco. I asked them why they allowed him to remain in power and the mayor replied, "I understand that a few of the people in your country do not like your President—why do they allow him to remain in power? You have free elections in your country; you can change your presidents every four years, you can express your opinions freely in the press and in speech. You won't get shot or imprisoned if you criticise him, yet you have elected presidents who have remained in office even though they were not popular with all the citizens of your free democracy. We could say to you, 'Why do you tolerate an unpopular president?' with far more logic than you can ask why the peoples of an oligarchy keep their dictators." Besides, he pointed out, those who were behind Franco were men with guns and money; not very much could be done without those necessities. I was told that the frontier barracks that had received us had had orders from Madrid only three days before, to let into Spain anyone they found in the mountains who had come by that route. That frontier had until then been closed, and people found wandering in the mountains were sent back in the direction from which they had come, for they were certain to be refugees without visas. Now that the Germans had made it impossible for people who had obtained Spanish visas to enter Spain by train, this frontier had been opened to permit such persons to get out of France and into Spain by the mountain passes.

Rose-Hélène and I had a clean, soft bed in which to sleep that night and we felt rested for our journey the next day—Wednesday, November 18th. The day the validation of my passport expired! Well, there was nothing to be done about that, I would just have to hope that it would not be noticed, or that, if it should be, I could find some way out of the situation. Before we left to take the seven-thirty bus, the mayor and his wife gave me some bread and chocolate to put in my bag for Rose-Hélène's lunch, as it was none too certain that we should get any lunch that day. The mayor slipped into my hand forty pesetas, about four

dollars. He knew I was without money, and he could not bear to think, he said, of our traveling without something for an emergency. I protested that I could not take the money as I did not know when or how I could repay it but the emotional little mayor said, with tears in his kind eyes, "Please, Madame, give me this pleasure, that I may remember that I, in my small way, was able to do something for an American after all that your country has done for us." I could not refuse, after that, to accept the money and it was with deep and genuine emotion that I said good-bye to that kind family and to that little Spanish town. I was unable to say more than good-bye, or to express the words of gratitude which filled my heart, but I am sure they all knew how I felt. The souvenir of our reception in that village is one of the pleasantest memories I have of any of our experiences.

The bus made many stops during the three-and-one-half hour ride to Y., and was crowded. We were objects of curiosity to the other passengers. We were obviously foreigners, and obviously under arrest, yet we did not look especially dangerous. The presence of a small girl, chattering gaily in French, asking questions about everything and everyone she saw, tended to dispel that impression, and to offset the effect of the serious-looking guards with their big rifles.

At Y., we piled out of the bus, the guards marching us off to the Military Headquarters. There we were again locked in a room and were told that we would have to wait until the Commandant could see us. We spent the better part of four or five hours in that building, part of the time in the locked room, part of the time in the Commandant's office. We were called, one at a time, Rose-Hélène and I being the only ones who were allowed to leave the room together. We went up the broad staircase to the Colonel's office. As we entered the room, Rose-Hélène went gravely to the officer who sat behind a large desk, and gave him her hand with a polite, "*Bonjour, Monsieur.*" There were three other officers there, and she did the same with each, then we sat down, facing our inquisitors. Rose-Hélène really does like people. She has a great curiosity about each new person she meets and is anxious to get acquainted. It never occurs to her that they might not like children in general or her in particular, nor that they might be unkind to her. She has never known unkindness. In spite of frequent uprootings and a rather unsettled life, she has always been surrounded by love. She knows the Germans are supposed to be cruel and mean, but she never has seen this cruelty manifested. The Germans she has known—

the Herr Doktor at home, the officers who came to L'Ormeau, the officers in Morocco, all were quiet and appeared to be gentlemen. She has never known fear, she has never seen me afraid—I have been afraid many times during the past three years, but I have successfully hidden the fact from her—it would not occur to her to be afraid of any human being. She has often, quite unconsciously, by this trustful and confiding manner, helped me through what might otherwise have been a difficult situation. And so it was this day. She surprised and disarmed these officers from that first moment, and it was hard for them to resume the stern expressions they had worn when we had entered the room.

They began, however, their questioning. The first was to ask me my nationality—they spoke in French. "*Je suis Américaine*," I replied. Rose-Hélène nudged me and whispered, "*Faut pas le dire, Mama*"—(you mustn't tell that). I told her to hush, that it was all right to tell it to these gentlemen. They could not repress a smile, for it was so apparent what her words signified. Where was my husband? What proof did I have that he was a prisoner in Germany? I produced his last letters which were, as always, in my purse. These were carefully studied, and a note made of his prison camp. Why had we entered Spain as we had? Because there was no other way to get here. The Germans (I added boldly) would not allow me, an American, to leave France. The expressions on all the faces were noncommittal. Then the Colonel asked to see my passport. That was looked through with meticulous care, not once but twice. The second examination brought forth a, "But this passport expires today." I tossed that off lightly, "Not the passport, just the six months' validation. It is a matter of five minutes to get that renewed—that can be done at the American Embassy in Madrid tomorrow." To my relief, the passport was handed back to me, my casual explanation and solution apparently having been accepted. I gave them Rose-Hélène's French passport and this was given a cursory examination, its owner trying not to look as important as she felt. "How much money have you?" "None at all," I replied, knowing that this would not be believed. "How, then, are you traveling?" I then produced the precious telegram which was read with interest. It was incontrovertible evidence that I must be without funds and that this was a response to an appeal I had made for help to get to Lisbon. "You have no pesetas?" "Ah yes, Colonel, I have forty pesetas which someone in one of the villages gave us, knowing that we were traveling entirely without money." "What did you give for those?" "Absolutely nothing, Colonel.

They came straight from the generous heart of the man, the Spaniard, who gave them to us." The officer lowered his eyes to the papers on his desk, but not quickly enough to hide the look that had flashed in them. He was pleased, and he was proud that one of his compatriots had done that.

Apparently all the questions had been answered satisfactorily, for the Colonel then said that we would have to go, of course, to Canfranc with the guards who would turn us over to the authorities there. There would be a train at eight o'clock that evening, which would get us to Canfranc at about ten, "Oh," I exclaimed in dismay, "is there no other way to get there? Is there no way to leave sooner? My little girl has been very good until now and has stood the trip remarkably well, but I do not want to try her too far. I should not like her to become ill on the journey to Lisbon. Is there no way we could hire a car? I will have the money to pay for it when I see Mr. John Smith at Canfranc—or perhaps the forty pesetas would pay for our share of the expenses." The Colonel said that he would see, it might possibly be arranged.

The others were detained longer than we had been, but everyone of us was eventually allowed to proceed to Canfranc. About the time the last person came down the stairs from the Colonel's office, it was announced that two cars were waiting for us at the door. I had already explained my plan to the others, and they all were enthusiastic about the idea and were willing to share the expenses. Each of our two guards got into one of the cars, the Colonel came out to wave good-bye to us, still trying to convey the impression that he thoroughly disapproved of what we had done, but not at all succeeding.

I seem to terminate my escapes and releases with a flourish, driving away from detention headquarters in an automobile. This time, we sped along the Spanish highway which led toward the frontier, going back in the direction from which we had just come, and none of us liked *that* idea very much. We intended to take the very first train we could out of Canfranc and not stay in that border town one minute longer than we had to.

XII

We were taken, upon arrival at Canfranc, to the hotel near the station for lunch, or dinner, I don't know which it was, for it was then nearly

four o'clock. We could not eat in the main dining room, or in the café; we were locked in a special room and a guard stood at the door. One young man was allowed to come in and talk to us, however. He was a Dutchman who had made his escape out of France the day before we had, and he was now taking the train for Madrid, on his way to join the Allied forces in England. His train was leaving in a very few minutes, but we had time to exchange congratulations and Bon Voyages and Good Lucks before he left. I asked him whether he would try to find Mr. John Smith, tell him I was in the hotel and would like to see him. This he promised to do and this he did, for very soon after, Mr. Smith arrived at the door and, after some conversation with the guard, was allowed to come into the room and talk to me. He had received full instructions from Lisbon concerning me and was ready to help me in any and every way possible. He was not at all surprised that we were there, for he had received word the day before from one of his agents that I had arrived safely in Spain. I have no idea what agent in what town, but the grapevine telegraph is a remarkably efficient means of communication in Europe today.

When we had finished our meal, we were taken to the international station and were there turned over to the authorities who examined our passports, found them all in order (the validation expiration was not noticed) and stamped them for our entry into Spain at Canfranc. We were officially in Spain. And we no longer were under arrest. There remained only to give the guards the money the others owed for their hotel bills at X. and to pay for the car. I was given money for my share of the car by Mr. Smith, and the others cashed their checks. Money was given the guards to take back to X. and to give to the chauffeurs; we thanked them for having taken such good care of us for nearly three days, and they departed, to return to their mountain retreat far beyond X.

Rose-Hélène and I were now exactly where we would have been had we not got off the train the preceding Saturday; there was nothing more to do but rest and relax until the baggage arrived. I found Monsieur Louis' friend, Monsieur Henri, explained the circumstances to him, asked him whether he would telephone Monsieur Louis and ask him to send our baggage along by the morning train. This he agreed to do and he told me that we would probably have it by noon the next day, in time to take the four o'clock train that afternoon for Madrid.

There were bedrooms in the station which could be rented and I got

one for Rose-Hélène and myself, with twin beds, into one of which I soon put my child. The room was not too clean, and there was no hot water, but I felt that never again would I mind little things like that, after what we had gone through the past five days.

The next morning we all stayed in the dining room of the station. It being an international depot, one platform was French, the other was Spanish. There were doors on both sides of the dining room, giving on to the two platforms, and we were terrified lest we should, just by opening the wrong door, find ourselves once more in France! So we opened no doors, we just sat in the dining room, waiting for noon and the train from Toulouse to arrive. Monsieur Henri told me that he had talked with Monsieur Louis and the latter had been delighted to have news of his cousin and he was sending her all his best wishes—in the form, naturally, of all our trunks. Monsieur Henri warned us that it would be more prudent if we should go up to our rooms when the train came in, as Germans had come in on it a day or so before, and had looked about the station for travelers who had entered Spain illegally, blandly ignoring the fact that it was hardly Germany's business to take care of that matter. So, when we heard the train pulling into the station, we scuttled up to our rooms.

Mr. Smith tapped at my door a little later and said it was all right to come down, the coast was clear. We let the others know, and we all went down to the dining room again, this time for lunch. Mr. Smith sat at Rose-Hélène's and my table and he told me, in a low tone of voice, that our trunks had arrived, but we were not to do anything about them until there were fewer people around. The porter who was taking care of us and who understood the situation, would let us know what to do.

Our friend then indicated a table on the other side of the room. "Those men over there are French customs and immigration officials. Don't speak to them, don't make yourself known to them. Actually, of course, they know you are here, they know who you are, and how you came. But officially they don't know it, and they don't want to know. So don't put them in the position of having to do their duty regarding you."

I was afraid to even look in that direction, though the men appeared not to look at or notice us. It was a strange situation, and not an enjoyable one, and I was much relieved when they finished their lunch and disappeared through one of the doors—into France.

As we were finishing our lunch, Mr. Smith said, "Here comes a friend of yours to speak to you." I turned around, curious to see who it was, for I could not believe that I had any friends who would be in that part of the world just then. It was Monsieur Belvian! He was still going back and forth on the Toulouse-Canfranc train, apparently, and he had heard that Rose-Hélène and I were there. He smiled as he shook hands with me—the first smile I had ever seen on his face—and said he was glad to see us again, and in that place. After a few minutes' conversation, he asked me whether I would like him to tell my aunt that we had arrived safely, and I said I would appreciate it very much if he could telephone her when he got back to Toulouse. This he promised to do, and he also agreed to take back with him, to mail, a letter to Robert. It was a form letter, for prisoners, unsealed, and neither the French nor the Germans could object to his taking it into France. He waited while I wrote it, then left to take the afternoon train back to Toulouse.

After that train had departed, the porter appeared, to tell us to come with him to identify our baggage. It was best, he said, for us not to go all together, so Madame Ginette went with Rose-Hélène and me, the others went later. The luggage had been locked in a little room on the Spanish side of the station where it had been whisked as soon as it had been taken off the train, the French officials having obligingly turned their backs during the performance. There were our trunks and suitcases, five pieces of baggage which had come through, under the very noses of the Germans. All my identification tags had been removed and others substituted, bearing the name of Felix Diaz. The only bag that was missing was a small overnight bag with a zipper closing, which had contained toys for Rose-Hélène and books (in English) for me, which were meant to entertain us on our journey. I could understand why Monsieur Louis apparently had deemed it best not to send this bag with the rest! All of us received every single piece (except that one) which we had left with Monsieur Louis, bless his heart. We owe him a large, a very large debt, and I hope to be able to go back and tell him so one day.

The baggage was all taken into the Spanish customs room and was opened and examined as though we had just arrived, with it, by that day's train. After it had been passed, we were free to take the four o'clock train for Madrid, all except the Belgians, who were going to Barcelona. I had the receipts with me for the sleeping compartment which had been reserved for the preceding Saturday and, by paying

a small supplement, Mr. Smith succeeded in exchanging the receipts for a compartment for that night. He bought our train tickets to Madrid, gave me enough pesetas to pay for the hotel at Canfranc and to get us as far as the Portuguese border. The ticket from Madrid to Lisbon would be given to me in Madrid at the Johnson Travel Agency.

Mr. Smith had been most efficient, helpful and kind, and I know he has helped many other people who found themselves in the same situation we were in. He longed to be able to go to North Africa, but the Spanish authorities would not allow him to pass through Spain unless he had a Portuguese or a British visa. He begged me to speak to someone in Lisbon and ask them to try to arrange these visas for him. I did what I could, but I do not know what was done about it. The Gare Internationale at Canfranc is now entirely under German control, the German troops having established themselves there so, presumably, Mr. Smith is no longer of any use at that point even though he may have been allowed to remain there—which is doubtful. If only I could have brought along with me, as recruits, every Frenchman and Spaniard I met in France from Toulouse to the frontier, and in Spain, who was in sympathy with the Allied cause, I would have arrived in Lisbon with enough men to form at least a brigade. One knows, however, that they are all serving our cause as best they can where they are.

Our party of nine disbanded there at Canfranc. Six of us took the train to Madrid, the three Belgians waved good-bye from the Canfranc platform, their train for Barcelona not leaving until later.

We arrived at Madrid at ten o'clock the next morning, Friday, and went to one of the best hotels. I felt we both were entitled to some degree of comfort, if not luxury, by that time. In the afternoon, while Rose-Hélène had her nap, I went to the Johnson Travel Agency. They were not at all sure what was expected of them until I showed them Mr. Jones' telegram, then they agreed to furnish our Madrid-Marvao tickets, to the Portuguese frontier. One could not buy, in Madrid, a ticket all the way to Lisbon; the Lisbon ticket had to be bought at Marvao, the first station on the Portuguese side of the Spanish-Portuguese border. They promised to telegraph the station master at Marvao, asking him to give me my ticket and enough escudos to get us to Lisbon, for which he would be reimbursed by Mr. Jones of the American Express Company, Lisbon. This was often done, for travelers frequently arrived at Marvao without escudos, especially at this time when it was so difficult to make all the normal travel arrangements in advance. I hoped to leave Madrid

by the ten o'clock train that evening, but it was discovered, when the man in the Agency telephoned the station, that the train that night was *complet*. Every seat and every sleeping compartment had been sold, but we could have two places in a first class compartment for the following night. It was not much of a hardship to spend an extra twenty-four hours in Madrid, so I told the man to reserve those two places.

I then went back to the hotel, got Rose-Hélène out of bed and we went to the American Embassy to tell them we had arrived, and to deliver various verbal messages which had been entrusted to me. I talked with Miss Willis, the Second Secretary of the Legation, and one of the few career women in the United States Diplomatic Corps. She was very pleasant, and kind, and made several helpful suggestions for our trip the next evening. Later that evening, the Embassy telephoned me to say that the Ambassador and Mrs. Hayes would like Rose-Hélène and me to come for lunch the next day, an invitation which I accepted with pleasure.

We were five at lunch, the Ambassador, Mrs. Hayes, their son, Carroll, Rose-Hélène and I. Rose-Hélène was no more abashed by the elegance of the Embassy than she had been dismayed by the shabbiness of the places where we had spent the preceding days. She still had not yet emerged from that delightful childhood state where everything was miraculous, where everything, however commonplace, was an adventure. Even if she had stayed at home in L'Ormeau, she would have seen and done new things each day, life would constantly have been offering little surprises.

We left Madrid that evening at ten. Miss Willis came to the station to see that we were comfortably installed in the train and to bring us a box lunch which we later found to be filled with delicious things which had come straight from America. What a joy that box was to Rose-Hélène and me, and how we blessed Miss Willis's thoughtfulness each time we discovered a new treasure tucked away in its depths. We were eight in the compartment, the other six passengers being men, all of whom were smoking, and it was evident that Rose-Hélène would not have a very restful night there. So Miss Willis went to the sleeping car and managed to get a single compartment in which I could put my child, for which I was profoundly grateful, for I got almost no sleep that night, nor would Rose-Hélène have had she been sitting in a cramped position in that smoke-filled compartment.

Miss Willis had loaned me more pesetas, so, when the Spanish border

was reached, early the next morning, I had about three hundred pesetas left. I hoped to be able to change these for escudos, but I was not allowed, by the Spanish customs men, to do so. Having entered Spain without money—which fact had been noted on my passport—I had to leave the country without any. My pesetas were taken away from me with the promise that they would be sent back to Miss Willis, at the American Embassy—as, I learned later from Miss Willis, was done. I arrived, therefore, at Marvao without a penny, an escudo, a franc or a peseta in my purse. And no ticket for Lisbon. No money for porters, nor for emergencies. The station master, to whom I rushed as soon as the train stopped, had received no telegram concerning me, had never heard of me, and could not give me a ticket or money without confirmation of my story. It being Sunday, I could not telephone the Consulate or the American Express Company in Lisbon.

I had a moment of panic as I wondered how we were to travel without tickets or money, then someone in the station suggested that the English Consul be sent for. I had not known that there was an English Consul in Marvao, but I breathed a great sigh of relief at the news, for, apart from an American Consul, a British Consul was the one person, more than any other, that I should like to see at that moment. He arrived without delay and he did buy our tickets and give me enough money for the journey. We continued, then, to Lisbon without incident, arriving there at ten o'clock that evening, after nine days of travel from Toulouse, a trip which normally takes three days.

XIII

I had time, during the twelve-hour train journey to Lisbon, to ponder over our next problem—where to go, what to do next. The fact that we were arriving in a strange country entirely without money was something so overwhelming I could not deal with it just then; I brushed that question aside for the time being and turned my mind to other angles of our situation. Now that France was entirely under Nazi domination and we could no longer return there, I did not want to go to America where we would have to stay, undoubtedly, until the end of the war. I did not wish to go so far from our home in France, nor to be so far from Robert that we could not get to one another if he should be released. There was still the possibility that he might escape,

too, although that was a more difficult feat now that all of France was occupied. I thought of the hundreds of thousands of people in the United States who all would want to be on the first boats which took civilians back to Europe after the war; I feared that Rose-Hélène and I might find ourselves stranded in America, unable to return to France for months after hostilities had ceased there. When you have had to be separated for more than three years from someone without whom you are only half your normal self, you don't want to be separated from that person three minutes longer than is necessary.

I did want to work for the war effort. But, could I not do that as well on the eastern side of the Atlantic as on the western? If only I could join, somewhere, a group of Allied workers! But where? Morocco was not possible. I surely could not get there, this year, and I would not even try, for serious and important fighting was going on there, and there would be a tremendous job to do in the way of feeding the natives and the French Moroccans, after the campaign had been successfully concluded. There was no use our complicating that problem by going there unnecessarily, to be fed and worried about. Besides, if the climate had been unhealthful for Rose-Hélène five months before, it would be now. I must at least be consistent and not run blindly and stupidly around in circles. Where else then? There was England.

Why not go to England, if we could get there? England and America were fighting together for the same cause, I could make the same contribution to the war effort in England as in America. And England was only a few hours from France—I would be able to see it, almost, just across the Channel. When France was open to the English and Americans again, it would probably be easier to go from England than from the United States. Perhaps if France were invaded, I could go over with a Red Cross group, hard on the heels of the invading army—what a joy and a privilege it would be to see the Germans being taken prisoner or fighting their way out of France, to a destined and certain defeat!

So, by the time we had reached Lisbon, I had decided that I would make a vigorous endeavor to get to England. With Rose-Hélène. We might have less to eat in England than in America, but we would have more there than we had had in France. England was not as safe a place to be, perhaps, as the United States, but we had taken risks and survived dangers for the past three years—safety no longer seemed all-important.

I went, the day after our arrival in Lisbon, to the American Consulate to let Mr. Miller know that we had arrived safely, to get his advice concerning my idea to go to England. Lisbon seemed to me to be a haven of refuge, a sanctuary, where no one need fear anything or anyone; the atmosphere seemed peaceful and calm. One felt that this was a neutral country.

I sat in the outer office, waiting to see Mr. Miller. The girl at the Information Desk was sorting mail, and in a chatty mood. There were a number of magazines which had just come in by a recent boat, and she was exulting over them. "It is months since we have received any magazines from the United States," she said. "I am so glad they have come now, they will be most useful to have when we are interned."

I stared at the girl. "Interned? What *do* you mean?" "Why," she returned, looking at me as though I were a complete ignoramus, "we shall certainly be interned, all of us, when the Germans come to Portugal."

I learned from this girl that, to those foreigners who were living in Lisbon, and perhaps to the Portuguese themselves, Portugal did not seem serene, peaceful and secure. Articles I later read in English newspapers by American and English correspondents who had come over to see what the situation was in Portugal, all painted the same picture of uncertainty, of tension. Well, it all depended upon from which direction you had come, I suppose. Portugal still seemed to me, after France, to be a securely neutral country, relaxed and calm; while to those who lived there, or who had come to the country from England or America, it appeared jittery and tottering on the brink of war, of invasion and swift conquest. Everyone feared the Gestapo agents who were known to be everywhere, but it was such a novelty to me to be able to look at a German, in a movie or a tea room or restaurant, and know that he could do nothing to me, I could not understand how anyone could fear Germans in neutral countries. When I saw Mr. Miller, and told him my story of our escape out of France, he congratulated me warmly, held Rose-Hélène on his knee and praised her for being a good girl, and such a help to her Mama. For my idea of going to England, he had less sympathy. I could, he reminded me, stay in Portugal only two weeks, since I had come there on a transit visa. This I knew, and it was a handicap, for there wasn't very much I could do in two weeks, but Rose-Hélène solved that question by becoming very ill, a day or two after our arrival in Lisbon, with abscesses in both ears, and

a light case of pneumonia. She woke me in the middle of the second night, complaining of pain in her right ear. I did what I could to relieve the pain until morning and the doctor came. He looked into one ear, then the other. Then he looked at me and asked, in consternation, "Has this child been in a draught lately?" I admitted that there had been a slight breeze where we had been a few days before. When he made the general examination, he found my child, he said, with no apparent reserve strength or energy—what could she have been doing to have reached so complete a state of exhaustion? I told him a little of what she had done, but without giving details, as the Consulate did not want me to talk too much about the way we had left France, nor did I want to talk about it. Pneumonia developed a few days later; this did not clear immediately, for Rose-Hélène was left with one tiny spot on her left lung. The doctor thought that would be healed before we were ready to travel again, but he said I would have to put her under a doctor's care as soon as we reached England or America. Rose-Hélène was in bed nearly a month and, while taking care of her, I paid visits to the various offices and Consulates, trying to plan our campaign for getting to England.

I eventually obtained the assurance from a man in a responsible position with the British Government in Lisbon that Rose-Hélène and I would be given a visa to England if I could get the permission from my own government to go. I then wrote my good friend Monica to tell her my idea, and she immediately and enthusiastically got busy at her end, with the result that I soon was swamped with telegrams from her announcing: (1) that she had obtained the promise of a job for me with the American Red Cross in London; (2) that she had found a nursery school run by the Fighting French down in the country somewhere which would accept Rose-Hélène among its boarders; (3) an apartment was ready and awaiting our arrival; (4) two seats on the Lisbon-England plane had been paid for in our name. Toys had even been bought for Rose-Hélène, a doctor was impatiently awaiting our arrival and the privilege of looking after my child's health; a dentist was waiting to inspect and take care of our teeth; a broadcast was being arranged for me with the B.B.C., and the publisher of a leading newspaper wanted to see me regarding the writing of some articles for him, perhaps as a permanent job. Money, Monica assured me, just was not to be thought about. I probably would earn heaps, but if I did not, she, Monica, owed me a sizable sum for what I had done for her, and she would take care

of Rose-Hélène's and my expenses until the war was over, when we could pay back as much as we wanted to pay, but that part was not to be thought about for one minute.

Armed with all this, I went to the American Consulate and asked them to send for me an application to Washington for permission to go to England. It was the opinion of everyone in the Consulate that the application would meet with a routine refusal but, upon my insistence, finger-printed forms with photographs attached were duly filled out, giving all details concerning my activities and movements during the past war years and the reasons for same; explanations as to why I wanted to go to England, and details given of the preparations which had been made to work Rose-Hélène and me into the war-time pattern of English life. We respectfully requested an early decision and I paid for a cabled reply. Then I waited.

All this time, in addition to Rose-Hélène's illness, we were in the unhappy position of being in a strange country where we had no friends, and no money. We called upon Mr. Jones in his American Express Company office the morning after our arrival in Lisbon. He welcomed us with great pride and delight, and I expressed my heartfelt gratitude for that telegram he had sent, told him that, but for that, I would still be in France. Mr. Miller, it seems, had, upon receipt of my wire, telephoned Mr. Jones to ask him what he, Mr. Jones, could do to help this lady. Mr. Miller related the circumstances, and, when he mentioned my name, Mr. Jones said, "Why, I know Madame de Vigny, of course I will do everything possible to help her," and he had promptly sent the wire which had saved me from a concentration camp. He wanted to know all about our trip, of course, so I told the story in detail, emphasizing the helpful cooperation at Canfranc, of Mr. Smith and others. He knew I must be in need of money for the first few days of our stay in Lisbon, so he gave me about twenty dollars, which I gratefully accepted. He expected, quite naturally, that I would soon be receiving money from America, and I did not tell him that there was no source of income for us but in France and that, of course, was lost to us until we could return there. We had no funds, no assets in the United States except for a few pieces of antique furniture and silver which I had left in the care of friends; perhaps I could sell that when we got back home, but, until then, there would be nothing. The situation was so appalling, I felt no emotion whatsoever about it. One can worry about small things, but this was so colossal, so overwhelming, my mind refused to

grasp or accept it. I was unable, in any case, to cope with the matter even to the extent of thinking about it, during the first days of Rose-Hélène's illness, for worry about her drove everything else out of my mind.

We had moved, the day after our arrival, to a pension recommended by Mr. Jones and a fortunate move it proved to be. The place was very clean, it was owned and run by a Swiss family who did all they could to make the pension attractive and the guests comfortable. They were so accustomed to refugees arriving without money and not being able to pay the weekly bills until months later, they were quite unmoved when I broke the news to them, after the first week, that I would be unable to pay them immediately. Most of the money Mr. Jones had loaned me had gone to pay the hotel bill and our meals for the first two days, the taxi to the pension and the transfer of our baggage there. So, when the doctor left a prescription for Rose-Hélène the first day of her illness, I had only fifty escudos left (about two dollars) and the bill at the pharmacy was sixty-five escudos. I had to tell the chemist that I would take only one of the medicines, I would come back later for the other one. I knew Mr. Jones would, most willingly, loan me more money as I needed it, but I did not like to borrow of him or his Company, not knowing when I could pay them back. Still, I had just decided that I would have to ask for another twenty dollars when I was called to the telephone; it was the French Embassy calling—Monsieur Gentil! I had read in the French papers in September that he had been appointed Ambassador from Vichy to the Argentine, and supposed that he had already left Lisbon for Buenos Aires. He asked me why I had not been to see him and I told him there were various reasons, one of which being that I supposed he was, by this time, in Argentina, and the other was that Rose-Hélène was ill and I could not leave her. He then said that he would come that afternoon to see me at the pension, which he did.

This was especially kind and thoughtful of him, for he had problems of his own at that moment. He looked very badly, had lost much weight since the year before and I told him I was distressed to find him much thinner. "How could any Frenchman look well these days?" he asked wearily. "Surely every one of us, in France, in Germany, or in the neutral countries, is suffering deeply. But, what of you?" He knew all about our trip, our escape out of France; there were only a few details which I could supply that he did not know. I told him that I

should not, in any case, have gone to the French Embassy, even if I had known he was there, for I considered that I would not be welcomed there since I had flagrantly and deliberately disobeyed orders and ignored rules of the government which he represented. No one, he said, would think of censuring me for what I had done, and I was welcome at the French Embassy and Consulate at any time. He himself had been in Vichy on November 7th when the news of the invasion of North Africa was received, and he had been talking with Marshal Pétain on November 11th at the moment Hitler's letter was handed to the Marshal by General von Brauchitsch. Monsieur Gentil had left Vichy on Saturday the 14th, not being able to endure the atmosphere that pervaded that city those days, finding it unbearable to come in constant and intimate contact with the Germans. He had spent Saturday night in Toulouse and took the Sunday morning train for Canfranc and Madrid—he was the diplomat I had been told about who was on that very train I had stood watching, so wistfully! If he had happened to look out of the window, he might have seen Rose-Hélène and me standing there!

He asked why I had waited so long to leave Toulouse and, when I explained to him the money difficulties, he said it was a great pity that he had not known about it while he was in Vichy, for he probably would have been able to expedite the granting of my permit. He wanted to know how I traveled, and I told him.

"What are you doing now for money?"

I told him, red and embarrassed, that I wasn't doing very much of anything at the moment, I hadn't yet had an opportunity of figuring out what I could do. He insisted that I accept a substantial loan which he said I could repay whenever it was convenient for me. I had just received a post card from my mother-in-law, saying that Madame X., Monsieur Gentil's cousin, was spending two weeks at Les Chênes. Monsieur Gentil knew that if his money was not returned before the war was over, it certainly would be after. Still, it was extremely kind of him to help me out of my difficulty, and it was a great pleasure to be able to pay the pension bills and to buy medicine and pay the doctor.

Even substantial sums do not last very long in Lisbon, however, for living is very dear there. There came a day, then, toward the middle of January when I once more found myself down to almost nothing. If only the permit would come from Washington, that we might leave Lisbon and go to England where we would not be destitute!

Rose-Hélène was out of bed by this time and, one sunny Sunday

afternoon, we strolled down the Avenida de Liberdade to the post office. I told Rose-Hélène to stand in a corner out of the way of the crowds while I bought the necessary stamps. When I came back to her, I found her looking at something she had found on the floor. "See this pretty ring," said she, holding out to me something sparkling and set in white gold or some white metal. I looked at it carelessly. A rhinestone, probably, I thought, or a paste diamond. When we got back to the pension, Rose-Hélène took her "ring" out of her pocket, intending to play with it. I looked more closely at it, and found that it was not a ring, but part of an earring which had apparently been stepped on and broken, leaving just this one stone. The stone looked better to me, now, so, the next day, I took it to one of the leading jewelers of Lisbon to ask whether it had any value and, if so, what I ought to do about finding its owner. The jeweler looked at the stone in astonishment. Curiously enough, the earring had been bought in that very store, a few months before, and the customer had been in that morning to report its loss and to offer a reward for its return. The stone was worth five hundred dollars and Rose-Hélène and I were given fifty dollars reward for having found it, which is a great deal of money to find when one is almost down to one's last dollar. Under ordinary circumstances, I would have refused the reward, but I accepted this one with alacrity. I took Rose-Hélène with me often after that, when I had errands to do about town but she never flushed another diamond.

Monsieur Gentil invited Rose-Hélène and me for lunch at the Embassy several times during that period. He was in great distress of mind and spirit, trying to decide where his duty lay. "It is so difficult," he told me one day, "for a Frenchman in the diplomatic service, these days, to know what course he ought to pursue. If he remains at his post, he is a traitor to his conscience; if he abandons it, he is called by some, a traitor to his country. His personal integrity, as well as his career, is at stake, and, once his decision is made, he cannot change it. So he must be certain, before he takes the final step, that he is ready, with his heart and soul and mind to follow it through to the end." One thing which influenced Monsieur Gentil in his deliberations was the fact that his mother, to whom he was devoted, was living on the Riviera and he feared that reprisals might be taken against her if he should turn against the Vichy Government. However, each time I saw him, he had mentally gone farther away from Vichy and, on January 12th, he said to me, "If I tell you something in confidence, you will not repeat it to anyone

just yet, will you?" I told him that I had never repeated to anyone what he had told me, off the record and in confidence, and I never would. Then he told me that he had decided to go to North Africa to join General Giraud, and he was giving his resignation to Vichy in a few days. On February 2nd, it was announced in the Lisbon papers that Monsieur François Gentil, former Minister from France to Portugal, Ambassador from Vichy to Buenos Aires, had resigned his post to put himself at the disposition of General Giraud, and had left by a British bomber for Algiers. Monsieur Gentil did not know General Giraud personally although he knew the General's reputation as that of a man of absolute rectitude and probity, a man whom anyone could follow with complete trust and confidence. A career diplomat cannot lightly transfer his loyalty from the government to which he had sworn allegiance at the beginning of his career, to another outside his country. Many French ambassadors have done so, some more quickly than others, but the latest arrivals in the Allied fold need not be those of the faintest, they may be of the stoutest, hearts. Monsieur Gentil had never, he told me, wished to accept the post of Ambassador to Argentina. He had done so only after his protests and objections to Marshal Pétain had been overruled. He said that he never had liked the ambiguous position in which he would have been placed in Buenos Aires as a representative of a government with whose policy he was not in accord, to a country which was pro-Axis. This appointment had come in September and it was not until two months later that the invasion occurred, and General Giraud's emergence upon the military and political scene, all of which gave Monsieur Gentil a way out of the unhappy position in which he had been placed by his appointment to Argentina.

About this time, during January, I received letters from Robert which were written just after the invasion. He wrote—"November 10th: Have just heard of your cousins' arrival where you were last year. I am so proud of you and of your family. I have been talking all day with my comrades here about you all and we are delighted that they made a safe journey. They probably will spend the winter where they are, then perhaps in the spring they will come to see us. We should like so very much to see them, and are all looking forward to their visit." This letter could not have been censored as even the most obtuse German would have understood its meaning, I should think.

Robert also expressed the hope that we had left France before the

events in North Africa and trusted that, as he wrote that letter, we were safely in Portugal or on our way to visit my "mother."

Rose-Hélène and I used to go quite often to Estoril to spend the day with Jean Dewez (who, by that time, was in Lisbon also) and his mother. The trains from Lisbon to Estoril were always filled with Germans as a great many of them made their headquarters at Estoril. One morning, there was a scramble for seats. All we could find, Rose-Hélène and I, were places in a front seat and a stationary seat facing it. I gave Rose-Hélène the place by the window in the opposite seat. Soon after, two big Germans came in and saw that all the seats were filled except the one beside Rose-Hélène. They calmly sat down, both of them ignoring the tiny figure by the window, and continued their conversation. They could not have failed to see her, and the man nearest the window certainly must have felt her little body which was practically crushed and nearly smothered behind him. I couldn't even see Rose-Hélène; she was completely lost but I told her, in French, to come and sit on my knees. She squirmed and wriggled from out behind the German, who still paid no attention. He made no apology, expressed no regret at having caused the child discomfort, or at the inconvenience of my having to hold her on my lap. He calmly moved over into the six-inch space Rose-Hélène had occupied and went on talking.

This is one incident which contributed to my belief that courtesy in a German is *not* innate, that the solicitude for children and the ostentatious courtesy which one saw in Paris was propagandism. Portugal was a neutral country and the Germans there were free to obey their natural instincts and one saw everywhere their complete lack of thoughtfulness, their rudeness and arrogance. I could not imagine a Frenchman, nor an Englishman, nor an American, behaving toward a small child as these Germans had behaved.

Early in February, after I had been waiting five weeks for a reply from Washington, I was served notice by the Portuguese police that, unless we had left the country by February 20th, we would have to go to Caldas da Rainha there to live in forced residence. I would not have minded this so much for myself, except that it would have meant a life of inactivity when I was craving quiet, concentrated action against the Axis. But Rose-Hélène's health had to be considered. The spot on her lung had healed, a fluoroscopic examination revealed, but she still had very little resistance and the doctor advised me not to subject her to extreme fatigue or to a damp or rigorous climate, and I was to see

that she had a balanced diet and the necessary vitamins and calories. So Caldas da Rainha, in the north of Portugal, did not seem to be indicated for Rose-Hélène. Therefore, I asked Mr. Hageman in the Consulate to send a cable to Washington, at my expense, respectfully requesting an early decision regarding the application which had been sent January 2nd. This time, the reply came, and came promptly—
APPLICATION VALIDATION ENGLAND NOT repeat NOT AUTHORIZED.

XIV

So there we were. We could not go to England, we would have to go to the United States. And we would have to go soon, as February 20th was not far off.

This came just as my money problems in Portugal were solved. Tante Odile had written me to say that there was a cousin of hers in Toulouse who, when she heard from tante Odile about Rose-Hélène's and my plight in Lisbon, advised that I get in touch with her lawyer there, who would give me escudos, the equivalent amount of which she would take in francs from our account in France. She lived, a part of the year, in Lisbon, and always kept a sum of money on hand there. This worked out very nicely for me, and I was able to pay Mr. Jones, at last, all I owed him for my journey from Canfranc to Lisbon as well as what he had loaned me since our arrival in Lisbon. I paid Monsieur Gentil, just before his departure, and all the pension bills. It was a great relief to be able to do this, but it was a pity it had not been arranged sooner, for I had had three harassing months when, all the time, those escudos were there, of no use to anybody. Our cousin could not get back to Lisbon, and she was glad to have my francs in Toulouse, so it was a satisfactory arrangement all around.

But the money would not be of much use to us now, except to pay our passage to the United States, for we were allowed to take only fifty dollars each, into the country, which meant that we would arrive with one hundred dollars. There would be no job awaiting me in America, as in England, no apartment, no nursery school which would be willing to take Rose-Hélène merely because of her father's being a French prisoner of war in Germany. There would be no kind Monica who considered that she owed money which would be available for emergencies. There were other friends, it was true, in America. Good

friends, kind and dear friends, but one could not return to them after so long an absence, during part of which time one had not even been able to write to them, and say, lightly, "Well, here we are, for the duration. What are we going to do?" No, that could not be. I would have to work out our problems alone, in my own way.

There was, however, one slight hope. The Consulate in Lisbon told me that I might obtain, in Washington, the permission to go to England; it would be, they said, far easier to get there from the United States than from a foreign country. They advised me to go to Washington upon our arrival in America, and explain to the powers-that-be there, my reasons for wishing to go to England. They thought that the various liberties I had taken with my passport the past two or three years would need a bit of explaining, and reasons given for my having shuttled back and forth between France and Morocco when my passport had not called for travel of any kind, only the permission to stay put in France. When, or if, these explanations had been accepted at the State Department, perhaps my request to return to Europe at the earliest possible date might be considered. It usually suffices for me to see a faint gleam of hope in a given situation for me to consider the satisfactory solution of the problem to be a *fait accompli*, so I did not feel too disheartened when we left Lisbon. I was fairly confident that, after explanations and apologies had been made in Washington, a way would be found for us to return.

Rose-Hélène, however, dissolved into tears at the mere thought of having to go so far away from Papa. I told her we would soon go back to France. "When?" she wanted to know. "When the war is over, darling," I told her, not wishing this time to hold out what might again prove to be false hopes. "Oh," she gulped, "after the Americans have killed all the Germans?"

I had not consciously told her that that was the general idea of the war, she had worked the matter out for herself. I was ten years old during the last war, and I can't remember that I knew or cared very much about what was happening, or who killed whom. It grieved me that my child had had to learn, so young, that men must kill men in order that children might live in peace and happiness, at home with their parents. All but a year and a half of Rose-Hélène's life had been one of war, and she seemed to accept its miseries and discomforts as the normal state and condition. The wail of sirens, the bursting of bombs, the rattle of anti-aircraft guns, the being hungry, the knowledge that

men were killing and being killed by each other's hand, the having to travel on foot over mountains rather than by train—the name for all that was War, and there was little else in Rose-Hélène's mind and memory. Except for the fact that she was underweight, and was tense and high-strung, she showed little sign of its having had an ill effect upon her, but her calm acceptance of those horrors weighed upon my heart almost as heavily as a reaction in the form of a violent recoil from them would have done.

I told her later that we would find a kitten for her when we got to New York, a kitten that she would have for her very own. "How would it be my very own?" she demanded skeptically. "Well, you could comb it and brush it, and feed it, and it would follow you and be all yours." "What," she inquired bitterly, with the disillusionment of past partings, "will become of it when we have to go away again?"

For, once more, her toys had had to be sorted out and most of them left behind, because we were going to America by Clipper, and we were not allowed very much baggage on the plane. The doctor considered it inadvisable for Rose-Hélène to take a long ocean trip in February, and the Clipper cost very little more than the boats, which were outrageously expensive. A Number Four priority was obtained for us with no difficulty, as there was a lull in travel to the United States just at that time. Mr. Nunn at the American Consulate made the decisions as to who was to occupy the available spaces on the planes from Lisbon to New York. The Portuguese police were fussing and fuming, and their February 20th deadline was approaching; so room was found for us on the first available plane to America.

It was late in the afternoon when the big plane took off from the River Tagus, and Rose-Hélène and I were actually on our way to America. Rose-Hélène, on her knees, looked excitedly out of the window at the land and water far below us, accepting, now, this new adventure and even looking forward, with happy confidence and eager anticipation, to what awaited us in her mother's country.

I sat quietly, looking at my little daughter, thinking of the problems which would have to be met and solved when we arrived in New York. We would be separated by an ocean, deep and wide, from our home. We would be cut off by the edicts of war from our income, and thus would be practically penniless. The emotional strain would be great, for we would be many thousands of miles from Robert, whose letters had been an unfailing source of comfort and inspiration to me. It would

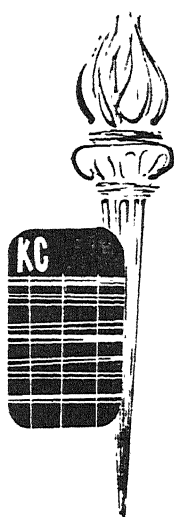
now take months for these letters to reach me, and I knew there would undoubtedly be long periods when I would have to carry on without them.

All this I knew and realized, but the realization of the immensity of these problems did not fill me with dismay. A way would be found to surmount obstacles and overcome difficulties in the United States, as had been done in France. I had confidence, by then, in our individual and collective strength, Rose-Hélène's and mine. I had learned, as millions of men and women—yes, and children too—are discovering these war-torn years, that there is a reserve force within us of which we may never be aware until we are compelled to draw upon it. Once found, tried and proven, that Will is a priceless possession which never fails. It can move mountains; it will carry one around or over obstacles; it enables its possessor to defend valiantly when attacked, to attack when menaced; it gives one the courage to stand firm when one knows one is in the right, to endure drabness and dreariness if that, for the moment, is one's lot. It helps one to survive loneliness, hardship, poverty, and even disaster. It enables one to hold on, to carry on, through the most difficult situations to a triumphant victory—the victory of one's individual self over the forces which threaten to overwhelm or destroy one.

Rose-Hélène, I knew, was of the clan. She was among those who had within them that unconquerable Will, and the resolute courage which walks with it, hand in hand. She had already proven it, on many occasions; I had seen it shining in her steady grey eyes, it was to be read in the set of her firm little jaw and chin. This power and this strength would never fail her; it would serve her when all else was gone, it would carry her, not only through these tests of her babyhood and young childhood, but through the important crises of her entire life. I felt secure for her in this knowledge, I felt no fear, either for my child or for myself on this, the eve of our next test and adventure. I knew that the good fairy had said to her, and to all of those upon whom it had bestowed this magic gift—

“Yours is the earth, and everything that's in it.”

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